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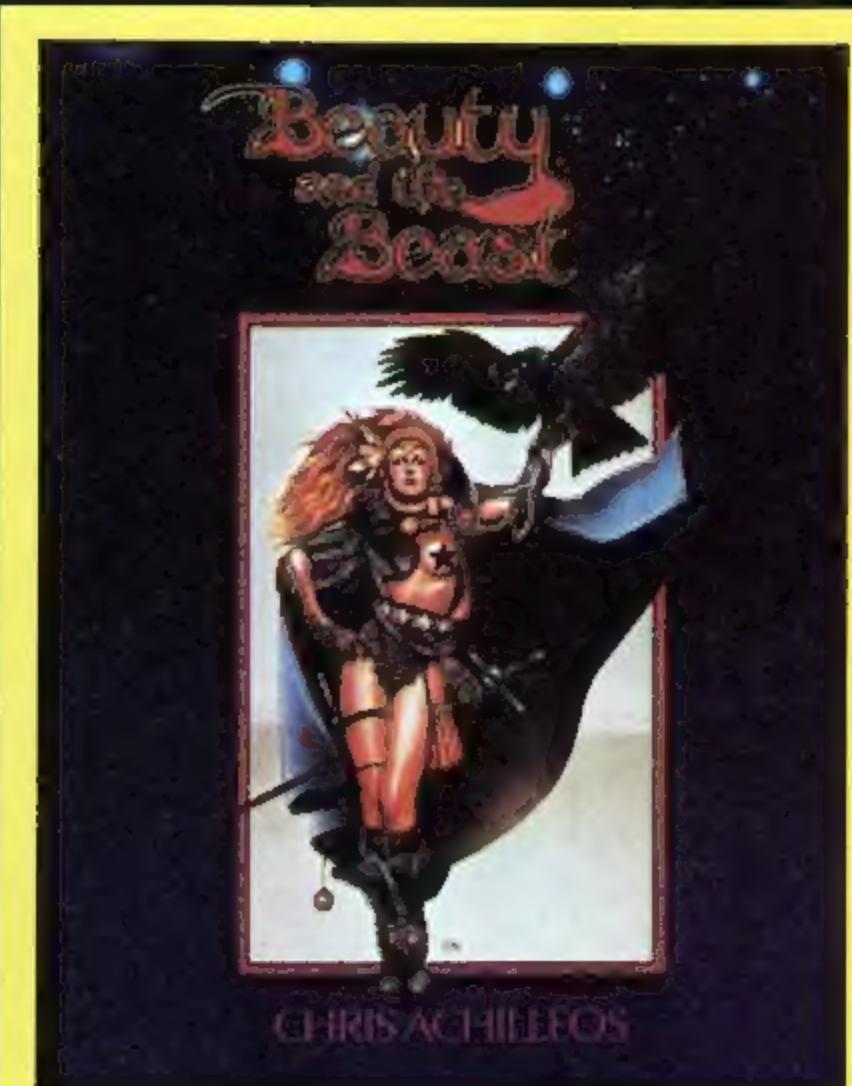
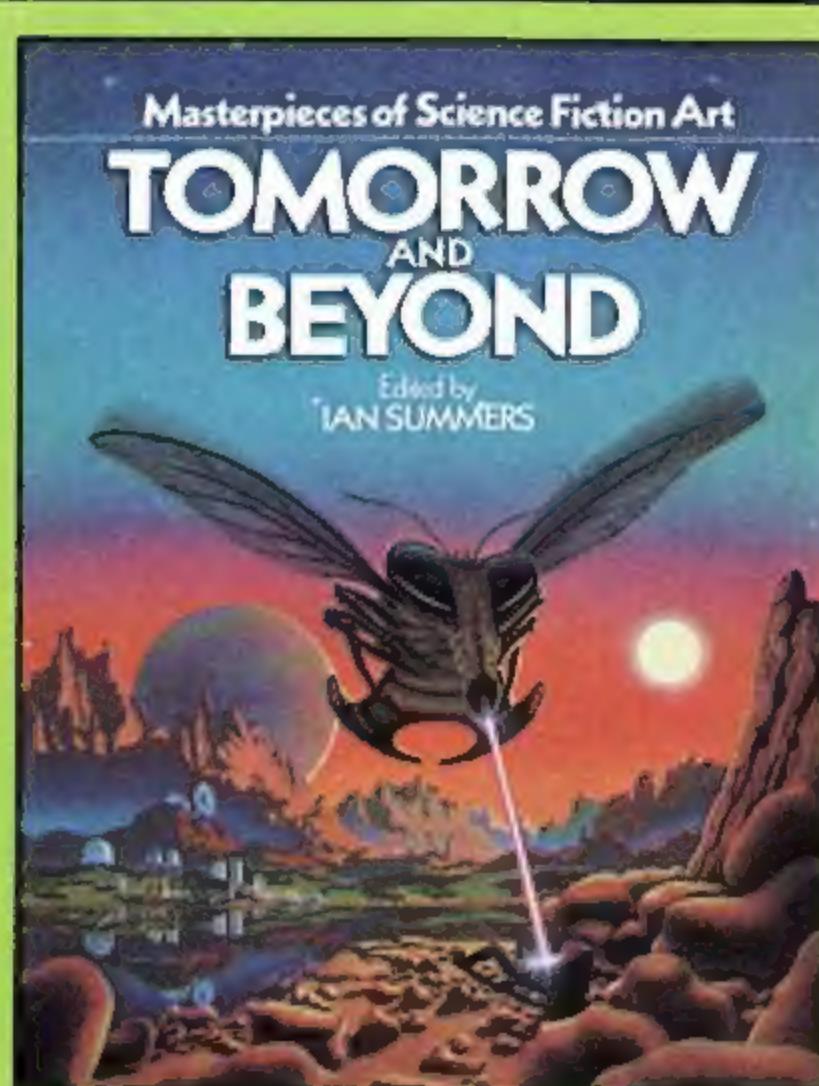
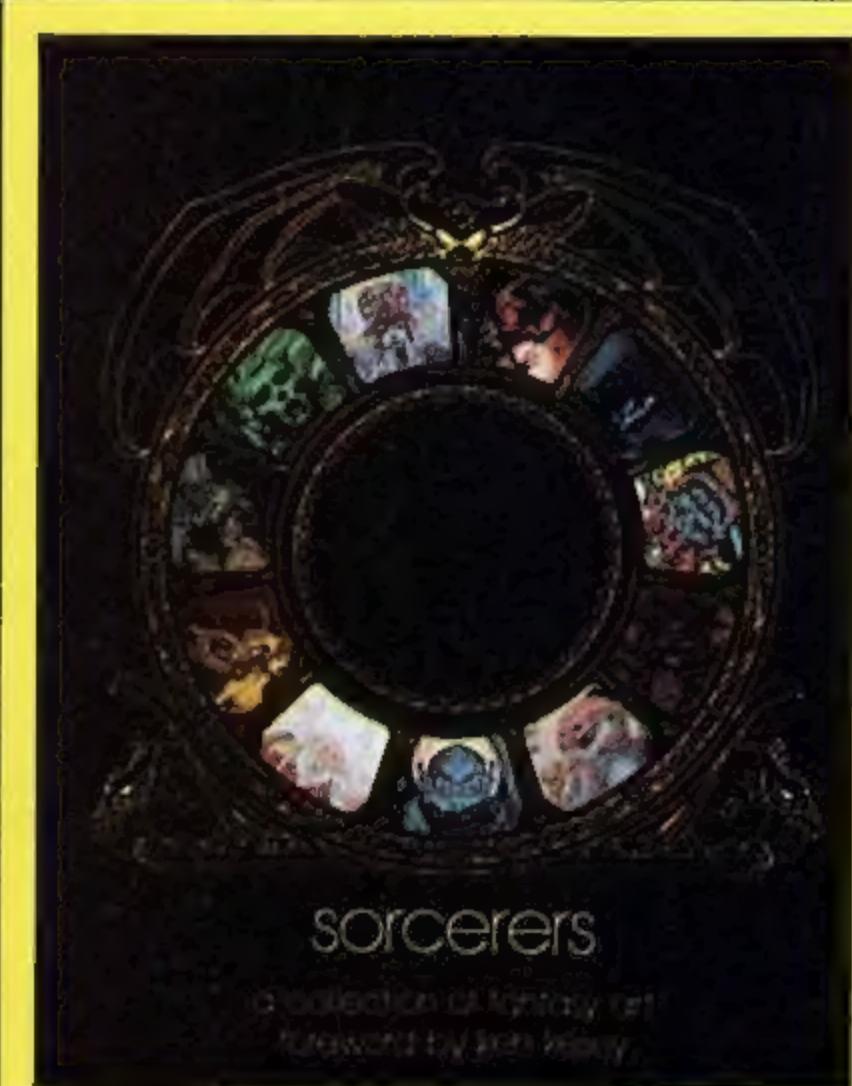
NUMBER 9

OCT.



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1984

MAGAZINE*

NUMBER NINE

OCTOBER 1979

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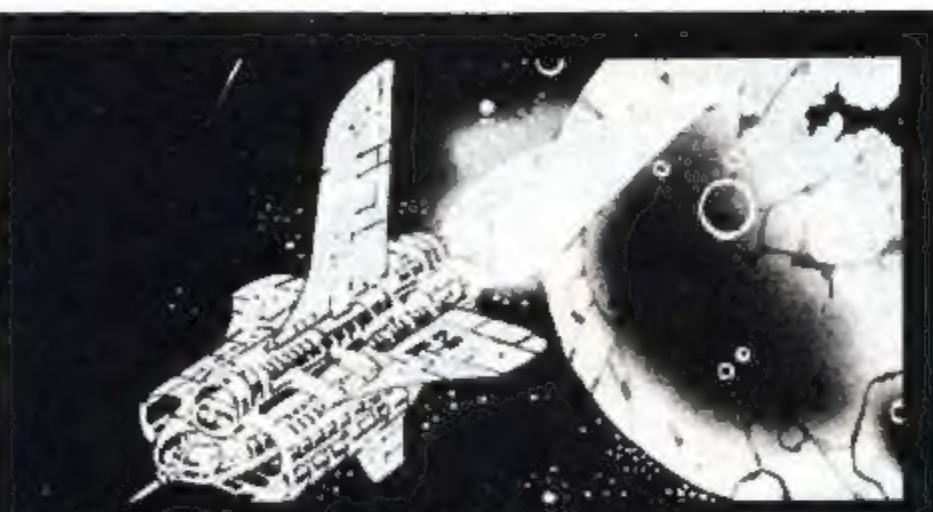
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BREAK EVEN 6

Between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, there ought to be a planet. Basic astronomy had that figured out centuries ago. Why then has it never been discovered? Might be that it is an itty-bitty gnat of a world!



CLEAR DANGER 34

They called him, simply, The Navigator, for he charted the forbidden byways of time itself. His mission: to save an oppressed society and prevent a dictator, a madman, a false messiah from ever being born!



REX HAVOC 51

Japan! The Island Empire! Land of the Rising Sun. Home of kabuki dancers, small cars, very complicated cameras with lots of expensive attachments, and more sliming, groatie monsters than you can shake a stick at!



HERMA 24

They found the Viking princess frozen within a solid wall of ice. They never expected her to be alive. But when her cold, seemingly-lifeless body began to stir, it gripped the world in passions never before known!



STARFIRE 43

Becker skulked in the shadows, waiting. When at last the boy appeared and began to disrobe, Becker watched with silent revulsion as the nude form was revealed. It was true. The boy was not at all what he claimed!



The SCHMOO 74

A dying man's screams echoes off the walls of the mile-high city. A man plunges to his death as his wife watches. It is the final sound she will ever hear, and a thoughtless, irreverent way to say goodbye!

incoming telemetry



WHERE, OH WHERE HAS BIG REX GONE?

I just picked up the eighth issue of **1984** and could not be more upset. Again, my favorite series was conspicuously missing from the magazine's pages.

Where, oh where has Rex Havoc gone? We have not seen him nor the **Asskickers** of the **Fantastic** since issue #6. Please don't tell me his series has been cancelled in favor of the far more titillating adventures of **Frank Thorne's Ghita**. As much as I like Ghita and Thorne's storytelling, it is not an adequate substitute for **Rex**.

Can't we please have a heaping portion of both? Ghita and **Rex**? Do away with the other stories if need be. But please don't take away my series!

JULIUS CROUSE
Modesto, Calif.

Rex is with us again this issue, Julius. Unfortunately, you'll find that Frank Thorne's Ghita is conspicuously missing. While, ideally we would like to present as many series per issue as possible (we're not dummies . . . we know what you're hooked on!) we have found that artistic quality is compromised considerably by artists forced to meet rigid publishing deadlines. We have allowed our artists to set their own pace, instructing them to insure quality first and consider deadlines second.

Hence, when deadlines roll around, we will not always have a Rex Havoc or Ghita adventure prepared for the issue. However, you can be assured that we will have the best possible art and stories to see print.

1984: JUST ANOTHER PRETTY FACE?

There is a slick-papered, color-crammed purported science fiction magazine being published across town that is a pile of piping hot pterodactyl shit compared to **1984**.

That other magazine may appear superficially slick, but what good is a pretty face when it masks an empty mind? Fortunately, **1984** has the intelligence, and when you come right down to it, its face, while not as pretty as the hooker's across the way, is still awfully pleasing to gaze upon.

RICHARD FRANCIS
Arbus, Md.



MUTANT WORLD GONE FOREVER?

Oh no! I just picked up **1984** #8, and have read, to my dismay, what you are leading me to believe is the final installment of **Richard Corben's Mutant World** series.

While it isn't stated anywhere that this is indeed the final chapter, the last page of the story is more like an epitaph than anything I've read since last visiting Wildwood Cemetery.

Please tell me it isn't so. Dimento will be back. Won't he?

RANDALL JENKINS
Randall, Ariz.

Rich's **Mutant World** series was originally scheduled to run six episodes, Randall. With some minor arm twisting we were able to persuade Rich to extend the saga of Dimento an additional two chapters, thus ending the series in **1984** #8.

Dimento, **Mutant World** and Rich's art have been so popular with the readers, however, that Rich just might be convinced that a second series would do wonders for his career. He says otherwise. But who knows what the future holds?

In the meantime, we hope you will enjoy the new color series which begins this issue. It is the **Starfire Saga**, the tale of a family's exploits within the vast frontiers of space.

A LEXICOGRAPHERS PARADISE IN 1984

I think **1984** sucks.

By now you must be used to hearing such lowbrow comments from your readers; moreover, editor **Bill DuBay** must be on quite a few more shit lists than just **Gloria Steinam's**.

The letters printed in your most recent issue rate as some of the most ignorant and reprehensible ever published anywhere. It brings to mind the stir that was caused by **Michael Oliveri's** letter in **CREEPY** magazine a few years back, wherein **Archie Goodwin** vilified **Oliveri** for his use of profanity.

Certainly lexicographers could write a dictionary of profanity with the words that are used so cavalierly in the Warren magazines now. But I won't go into a song and dance about that, or the needless violence or the inexcusable sexism. No one with half their colloid tissue is going to swill these inane tales of tomorrow as viable visions of the future.

I must say, however, that almost every letter criticizing the magazine, did so honestly and accurately. The only faults I could find with some of the jibes, and this is purely arbitrary, is that there was a surfeit of insults aimed at editor **DuBay**. No matter how much a person deserves it, you just can't go name-calling and write meaningful criticism at the same time. No professional editor or author is going to listen to that kind of harangue from a reader. He'll disregard the whole shebang, and then what good are the intelligent things that were said?

As for **1984** itself; yes, **Richard Corben** still draws pretty pictures, and **Jan Strnad** (**Leander** and the **Fat Queen**, **Encounter at War**, remember those carefree underground days, Jan?) still has the most readable story in the issue.

The rest was . . . unspeakable.

Jeez, how I wish Warren would have published a science fiction magazine back when **J.R. Cochran** and **Billy Graham** were the editors. I'm sure we would have seen some sensitive, well-wrought fantasies instead of the crap you're purveying nowadays. Ah well . . . ! Perhaps in some exceedingly more benevolent parallel world . . . !

DENNY DALEY
Chicago, Ill.

GHITA AND SONJA ONE AND THE SAME?

I enjoy **1984** magazine with its wild stories and "dirty" words for the simple reason that there isn't really anything else like it on the newsstands today. I'm not a person who can be easily offended by "sex, sin and rampant immorality."

Up until now, the only thing I could find not to my liking about **1984** was the story "I Wonder Who's Squeezing Her Now" in issue #5. It was not a bad story; it was simply in the wrong magazine.

Now, however, you have embarked upon the ultimate farce. How could you even consider presenting a no-talent hack like **Frank Thorne** in the company of such excellent artists as **Richard Corben**, **Rudy Nebres**, **Alex Nino**, **Alfredo Alcala** and **Wally Wood**?

Conning readers into praising **Thorne's** artistic talents while he was illustrating the **Red Sonja** series, was the biggest coup **Marvel Comics** ever pulled off.

Within the pages of the **Marvel** magazines, I've read such ambiguous and ignorant comments that **Thorne** both created the **Sonja** character and designed her costume; neither of which are correct. **Sonja** is the creation of **Robert E. Howard**, from his popular **Conan** series. As for her costume, **Esteban Maroto** should personally protest, for it was he who actually created **Sonja's** bikini armor, and **Thorne** who blatantly stole it.

Obviously all this talk of **Thorne** being **Sonja's** creator has gone to his head, for his **Ghita** looks exactly like **Sonja** in slightly different dress.

I know it won't do any good for me to beg you not to publish more of **Thorne's** grade-z imitation garbage. Further, you'll no doubt receive an influx of letters proclaiming me the schmuck of the century. But believe me, I know whereof I speak. And a man who is right stands as a majority of one.

TIM HEWITT
Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Since **Frank Thorne's** **Ghita** series began in issue #7, Tim, we have received hundreds of letters praising both **Frank's** art and storywriting abilities. While it would be redundant (and boring as hell) to publish all of these lavish plaudits, we did feel that your letter should see print, for the simple fact alone that it was uniquely the only criticism **Ghita** and **Frank** have thus far received. We really wish we could please all of the people all of the time, Tim. We hope you will at least find some merit in the other offerings within **1984**.



NOT ALL READERS POTHEADS, JUNKIES!

Believe it or not, there are those of us who are not perverts, potheads, alcoholics or drug addicts who do indeed read **1984**.

There also seem to be those who fight for immorality in literature, such as **T. Douglas**, one of the more callous and ignorant of your readers, whose letter was published in a recent issue.

Mr. Douglas slanders those of us who oppose his narrow view that immorality has its place in print. He also indulges in some choice name-calling in the process.

If jackasses such as he think they have any more right to their opinions than those of us who neither use nor condone profanity, then they are indeed as ignorant as their letter writing makes them out to be.

In the past, anytime someone has written to **1984** objecting to its pornography, he is immediately shot down by some foul-mouthed mongoloid with a typewriter and a king-sized superiority complex.

I'm astute enough to realize that there are two sides to every opinion. Why then can't you publish a balance of letters in each issue for and against profanity, pornography and all else that **1984** embodies, espouses and holds sacred?

It's my opinion that a science fiction story should be based upon the human situation first, supplemented by scientific knowledge. The stories within **1984** are based upon sexuality supplemented by nudity and profanity. I prefer the former. This is simply my position and all the insults from the sewer-mouthed illiterates of the world will not change it.

HENRY WEBB
Clinton, Iowa

1984 MEAN SPIRITED?

You know what disturbs me the most about **1984**? It's not the generally poor writing, the obscenity, nor the pornography, though each of these is a problem in its own right. It's the mean-spirited slant of the writing. Don't any of your writers believe that mankind has any worth whatsoever, or that some men are capable of high and noble emotions? Are all human beings essentially possessed by petty evil?

You claim that you dare to break new ground, to be realistic, to be daring. But all you've ended up doing, so far, is pandering to man's vices.

Let's have some balance; dare to be positive. Just once.

THE MAD MAPLE
Ontario, Canada

I just wanted to compliment **Bill DuBay**. He's doing great things for **Jim Warren's** magazines. I really enjoy his **Rook** series in **EERIE** magazine. And his stories in **1984** are always the most pleasing of the issue.

JOEL ADAMS
Shanghai, Neb.

DARWINIAN THEORY OF THE FUNNIES!

When you think about it, the emergence of machine set type within the stories in **1984** is a logical step, not only in the evolution of comics, but in the growth of your readers, as well.

The first comic books children usually see are **Richie Rich**, **Casper the Friendly Ghost**, or others within the **Harvey** line. They graduate from that into **Superman**, **Marvel Comics**, and as they get older, eventually discover the **Warren** titles sitting over there next to the "big people's books." By that time, they are about twelve to fourteen years old, with awareness of themselves and their bodies stirring within them for the first time. They may stay with the **CREEPY**, **EERIE** magazines for a year or so before looking for more adult, more stimulating reading. That's where **1984** comes in.

Within its pages, your readers can still cling to the comics of their childhood. But they are introduced to the literature that they will no doubt be seeking more of in years to come, and are slowly shown that type-set words can be as much fun, if not more interesting than funny book balloon lettering.

It's a nice little evolutionary process. **Warren** should be proud that he thought of it first.

JILL HAWKES
Claymore, Idaho

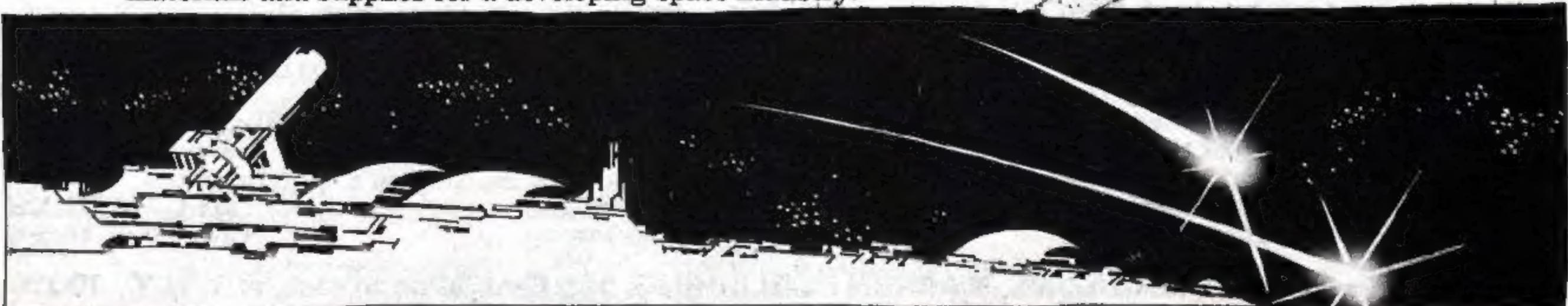
BREAK EVEN

Between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, there **ought** to be a planet. Basic astronomy had that figured out **centuries** ago, and they had the math to prove it.

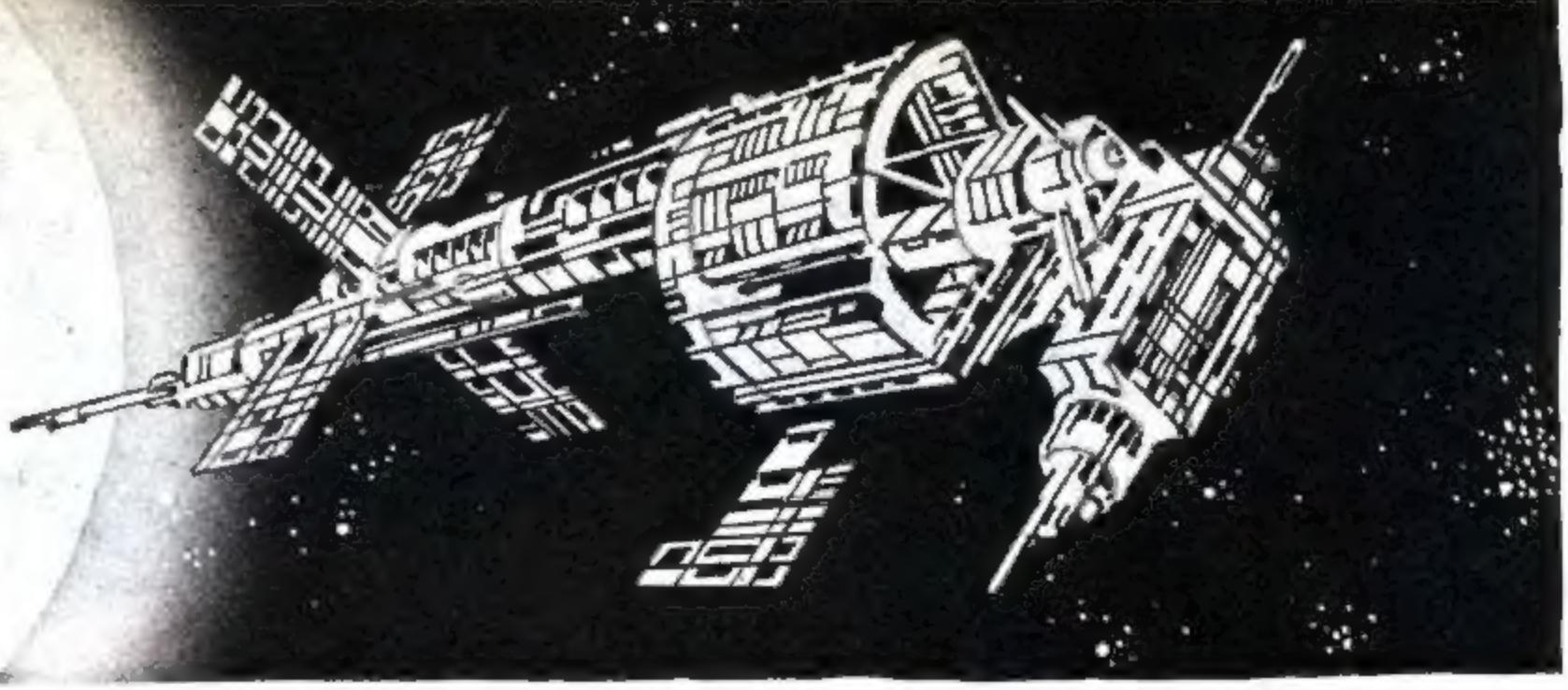
But since when does nature listen to mathematicians?

Instead, on the first day of the nineteenth century, they began to find the largest of several billion lumps of rock, stone, and ice now known as the **asteroids**. Within a decade, they found four more.

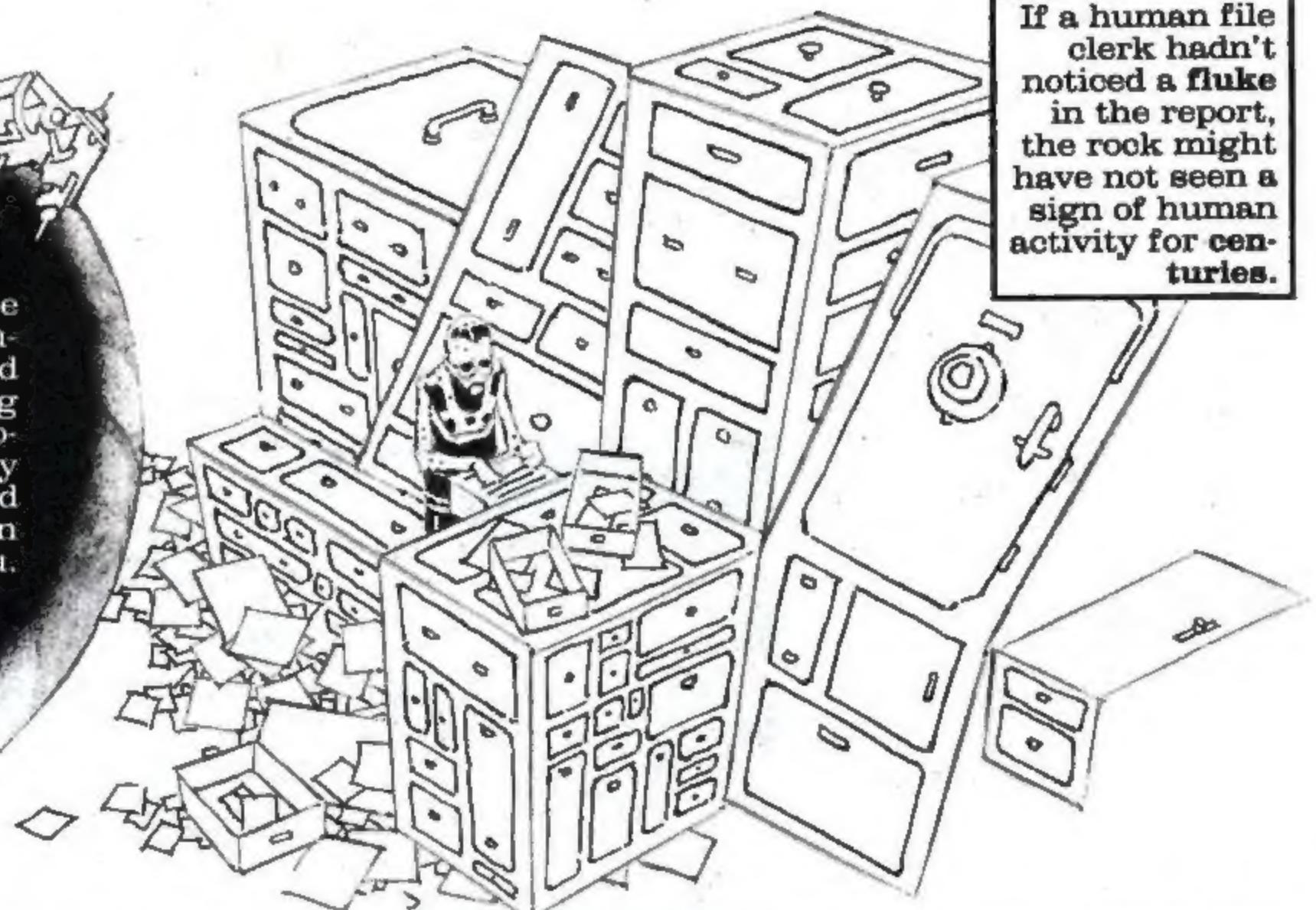
There are still many left to be found, two and a half centuries later, except now they are not just a piece of abstract astronomy, but a valuable source of materials and supplies for a developing space industry.



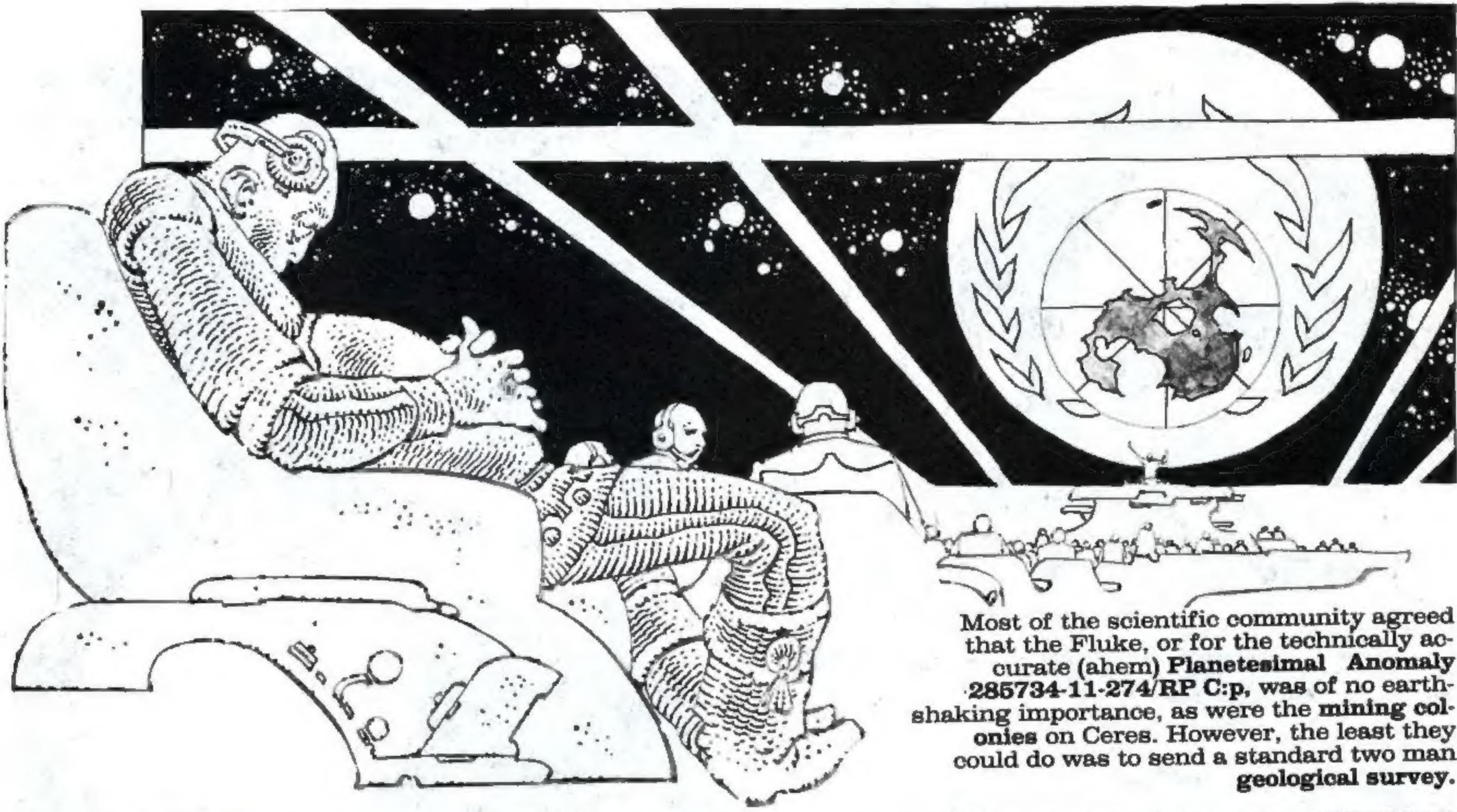
Most of the new discoveries are made by the wandering robot probes, which skip through the belt, charting the orbits for the Navigation Bureau, and scanning the bodies for valuable deposits of radioactives, metal ores, and water ice.



One particular probe came across one particular **rock** one day, and since it contained nothing to suit its preprogrammed tastes, merely reported its location and orbit to the Navigation Bureau.

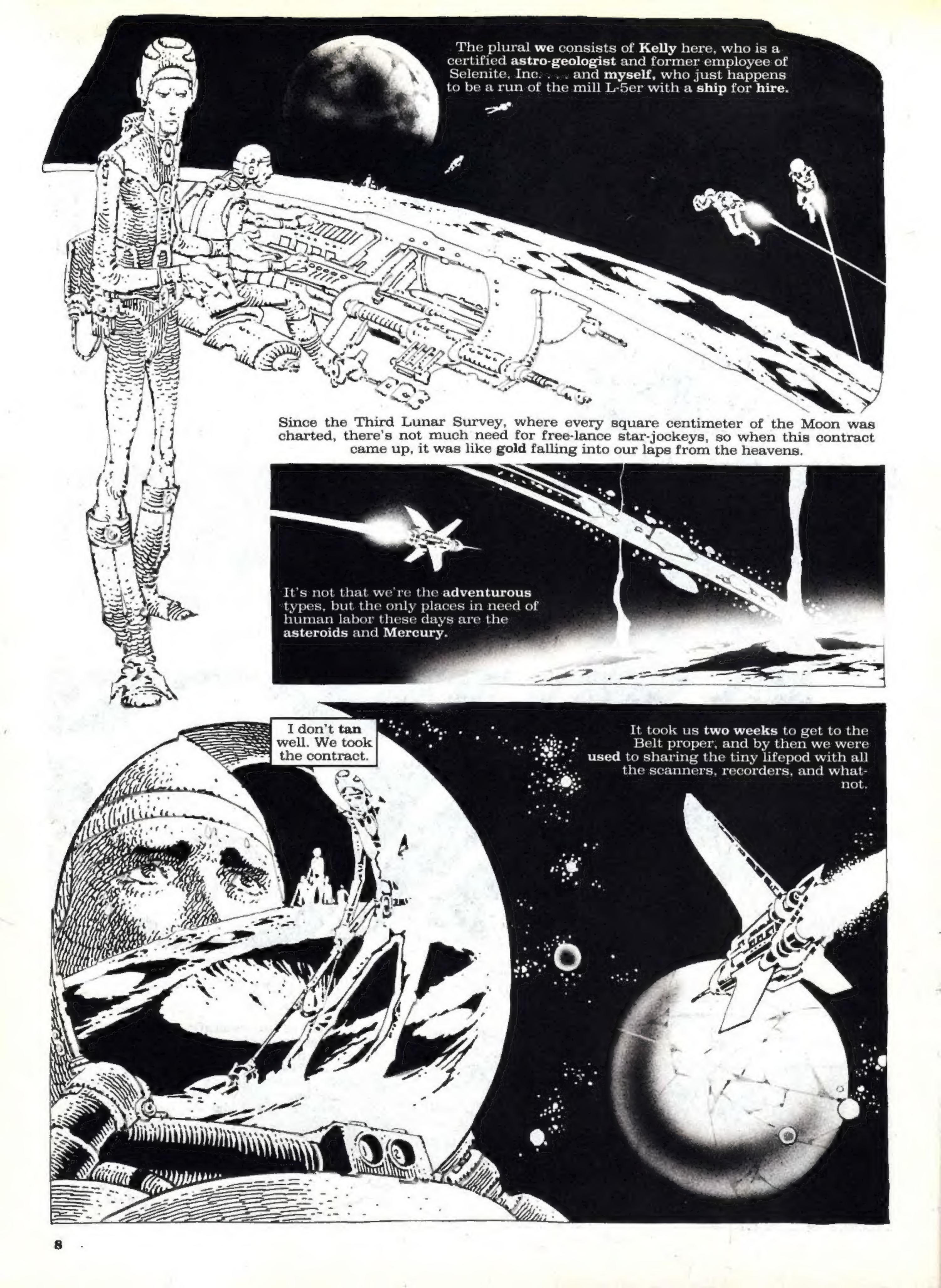


If a human file clerk hadn't noticed a **fluke** in the report, the rock might have not seen a sign of human activity for centuries.



Most of the scientific community agreed that the Fluke, or for the technically accurate (ahem) Planesesimal Anomaly 285734-11-274/RP C:p, was of no earth-shaking importance, as were the mining colonies on Ceres. However, the least they could do was to send a standard two man geological survey.





The plural **we** consists of **Kelly** here, who is a certified **astro-geologist** and former employee of Selenite, Inc., and **myself**, who just happens to be a run of the mill L-5er with a **ship** for hire.

Since the Third Lunar Survey, where every square centimeter of the Moon was charted, there's not much need for free-lance star-jockeys, so when this contract came up, it was like gold falling into our laps from the heavens.

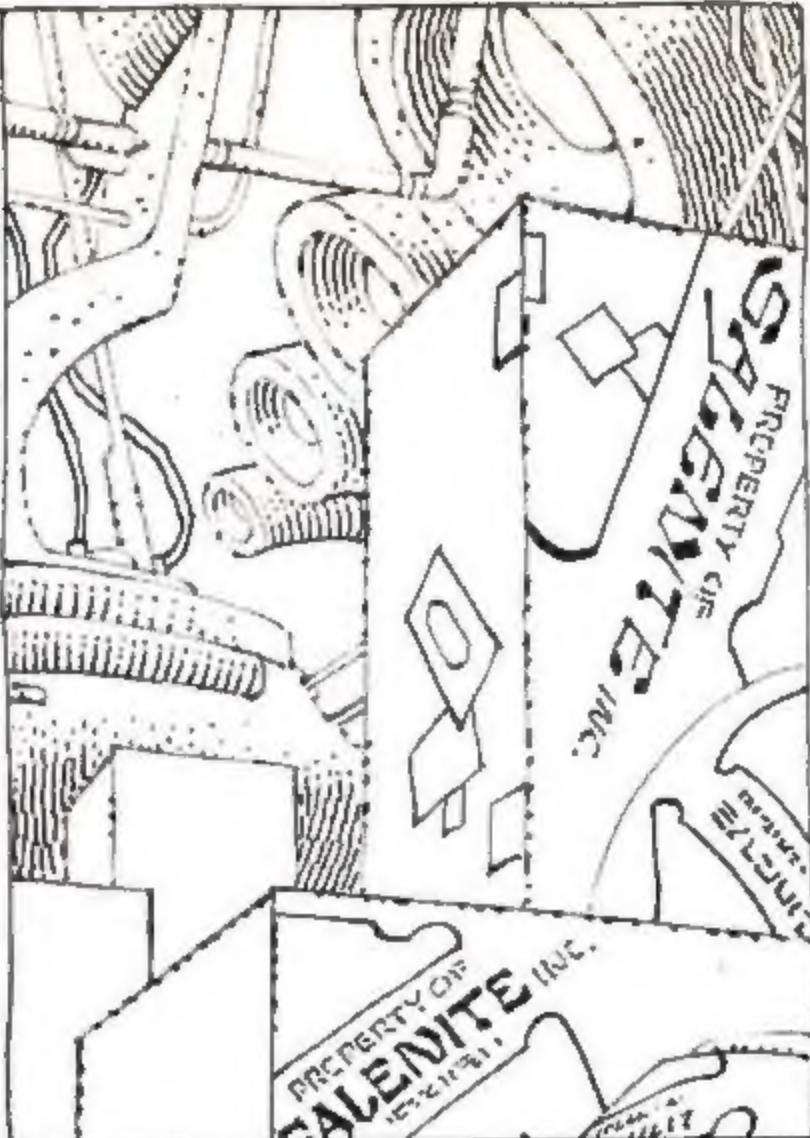


It's not that we're the **adventurous** types, but the only places in need of human labor these days are the **asteroids** and **Mercury**.



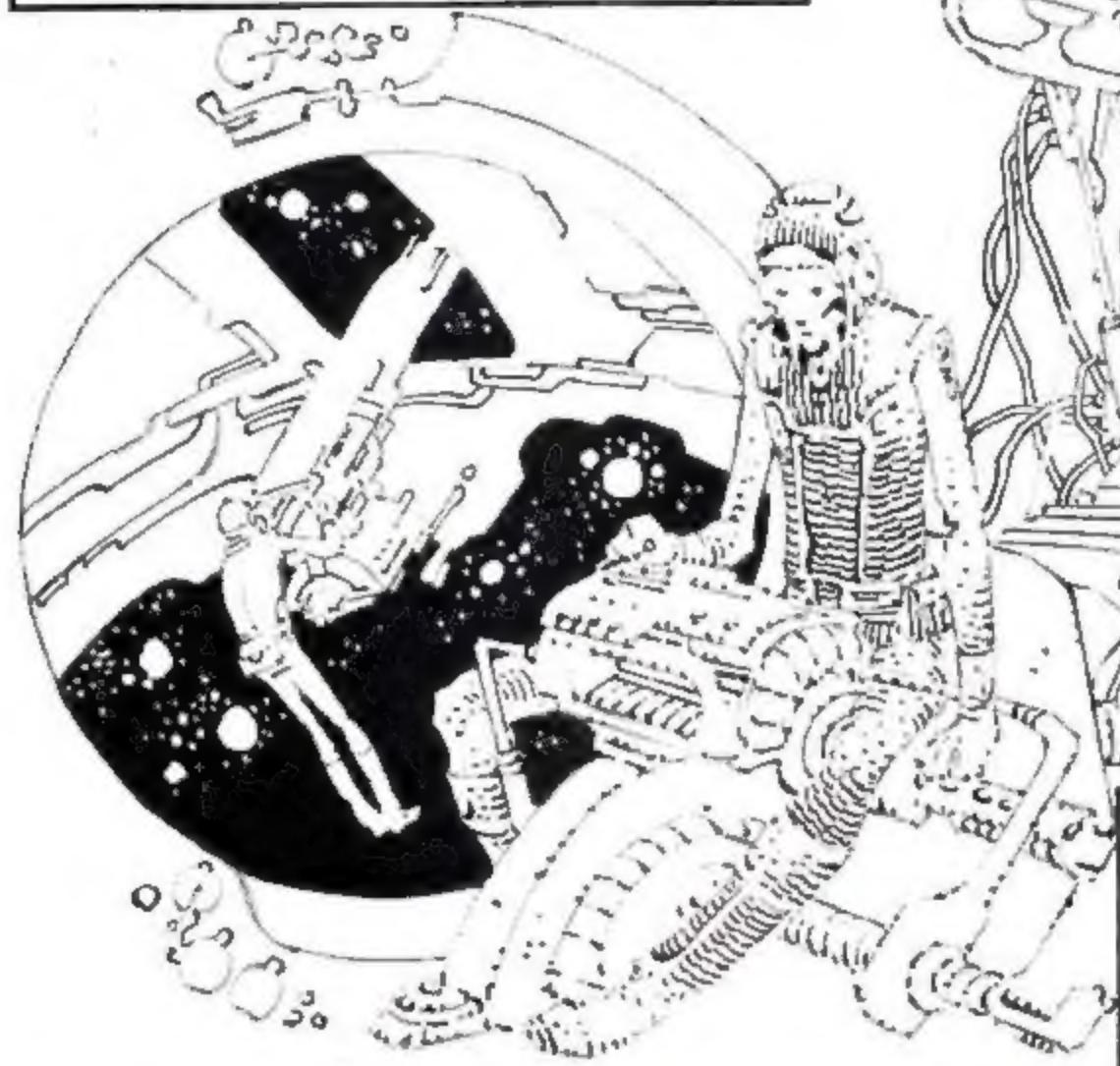
It took us **two weeks** to get to the Belt proper, and by then we were used to sharing the tiny lifepod with all the scanners, recorders, and what-not.

I don't tan well. We took the contract.

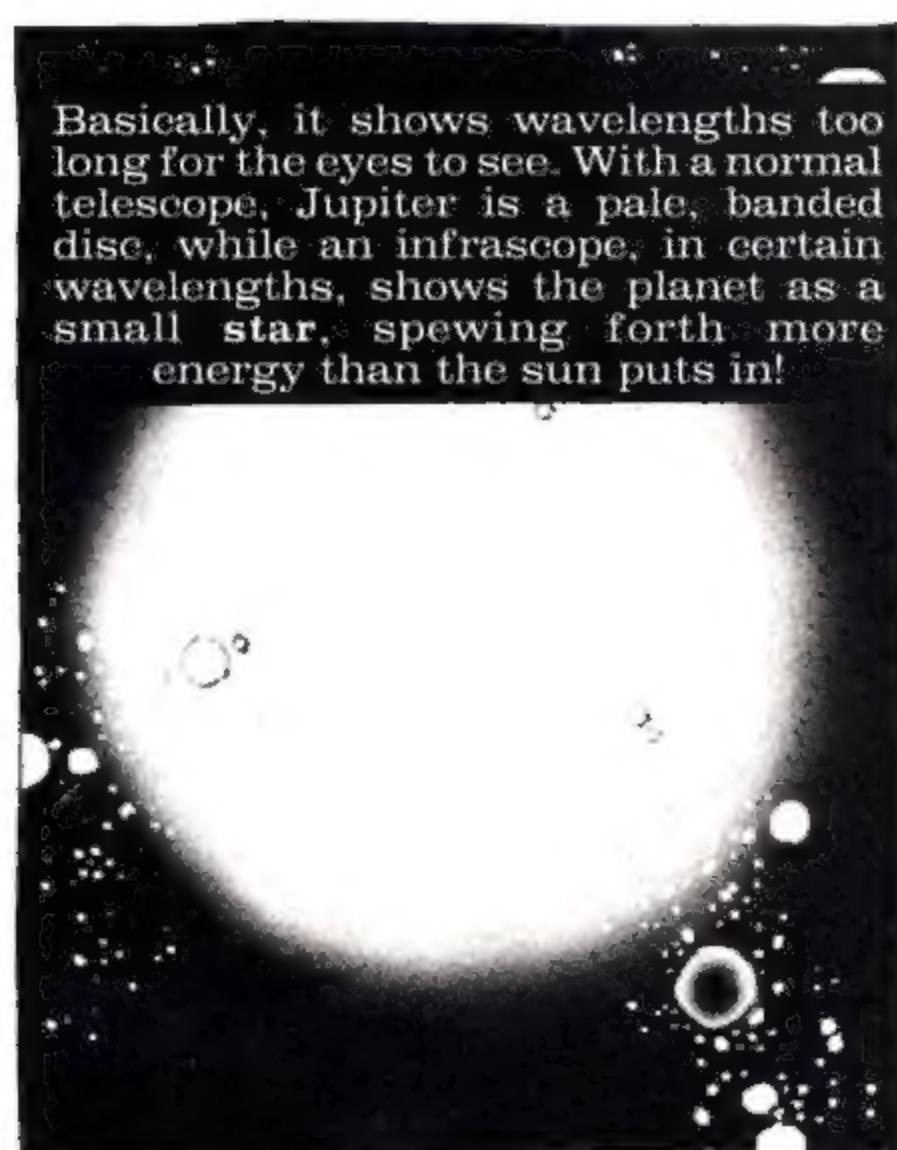


Kelly sometimes questions my morals, not always approving of my practice of "creative supply requisitioning."

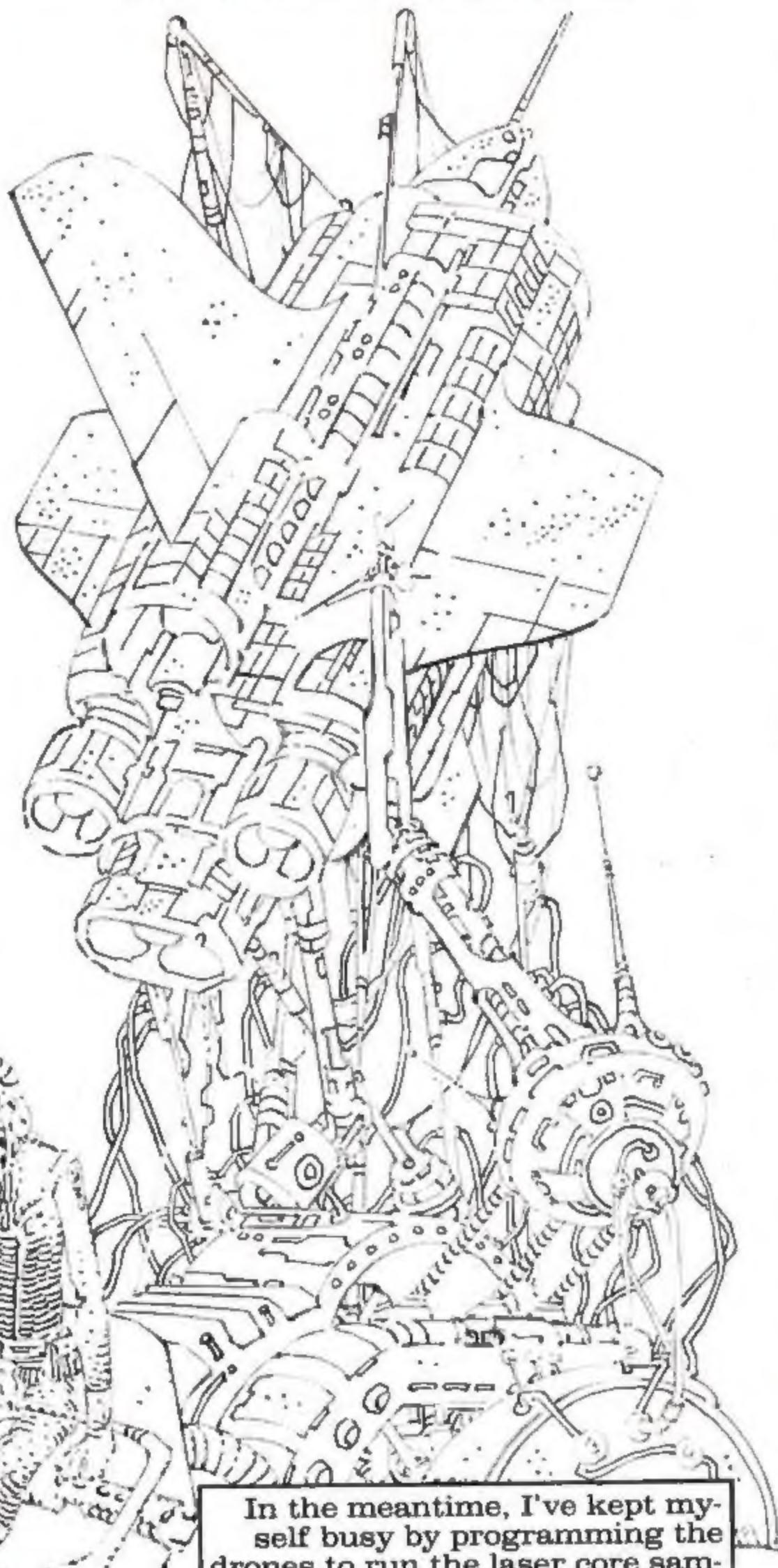
But then again, how else could we underbid everyone for this contract? Besides, the guys on Luna will never miss the stuff.



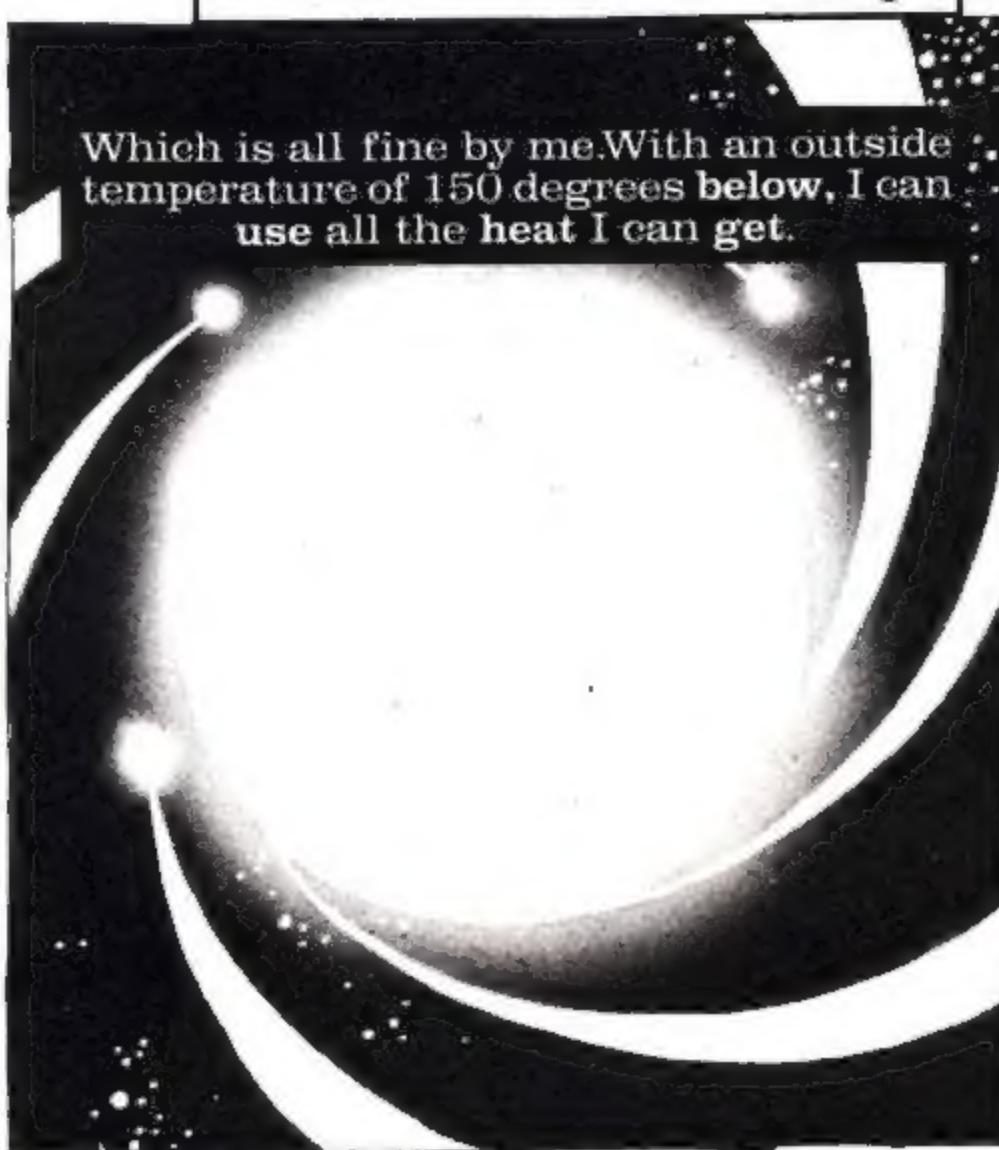
Basically, it shows wavelengths too long for the eyes to see. With a normal telescope, Jupiter is a pale, banded disc, while an infrascope, in certain wavelengths, shows the planet as a small star, spewing forth more energy than the sun puts in!



We did request two drones, though, and they were already at work on simple preventive maintenance like tightening screws and recharging a magnet or two. Simple, yes, but necessary to insure that we don't have to walk home.



In the meantime, I've kept myself busy by programming the drones to run the laser core sample drill, while I toy with the gear. One of my favorite pastimes is playing with the infrascope.

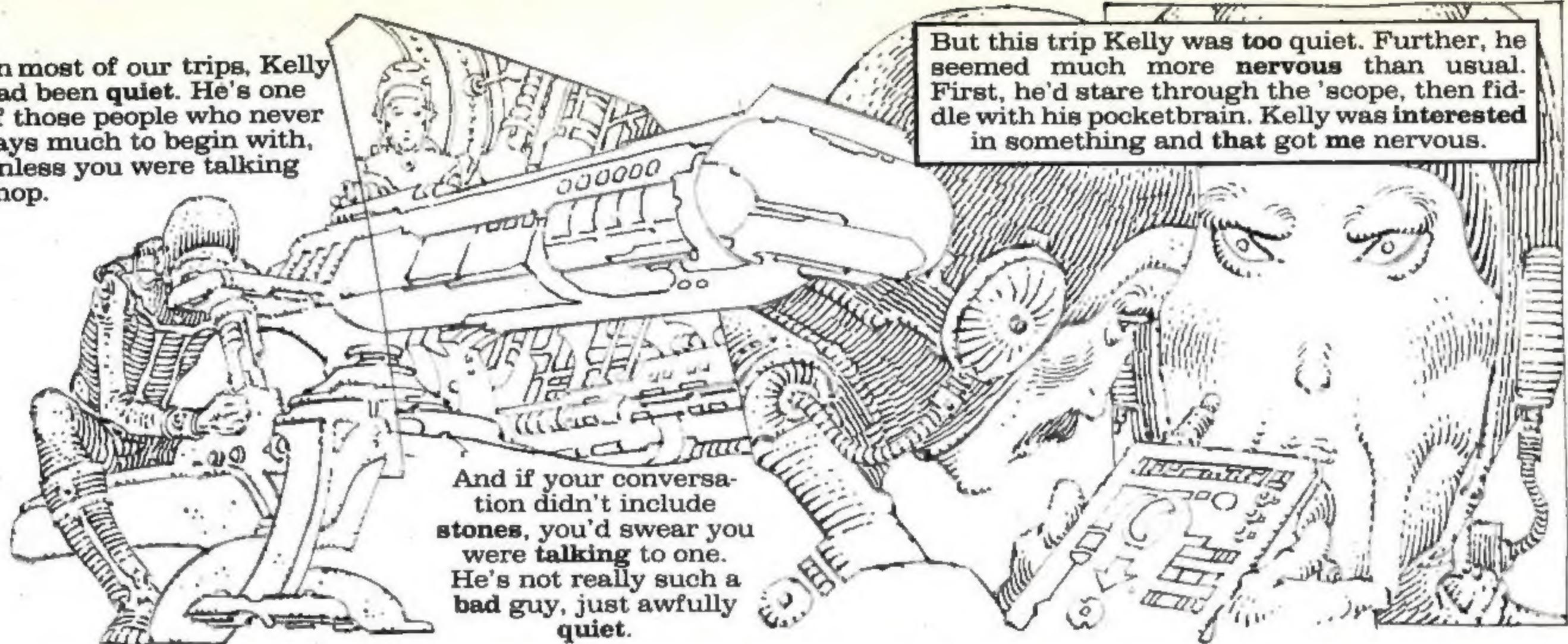


Which is all fine by me. With an outside temperature of 150 degrees below, I can use all the heat I can get.



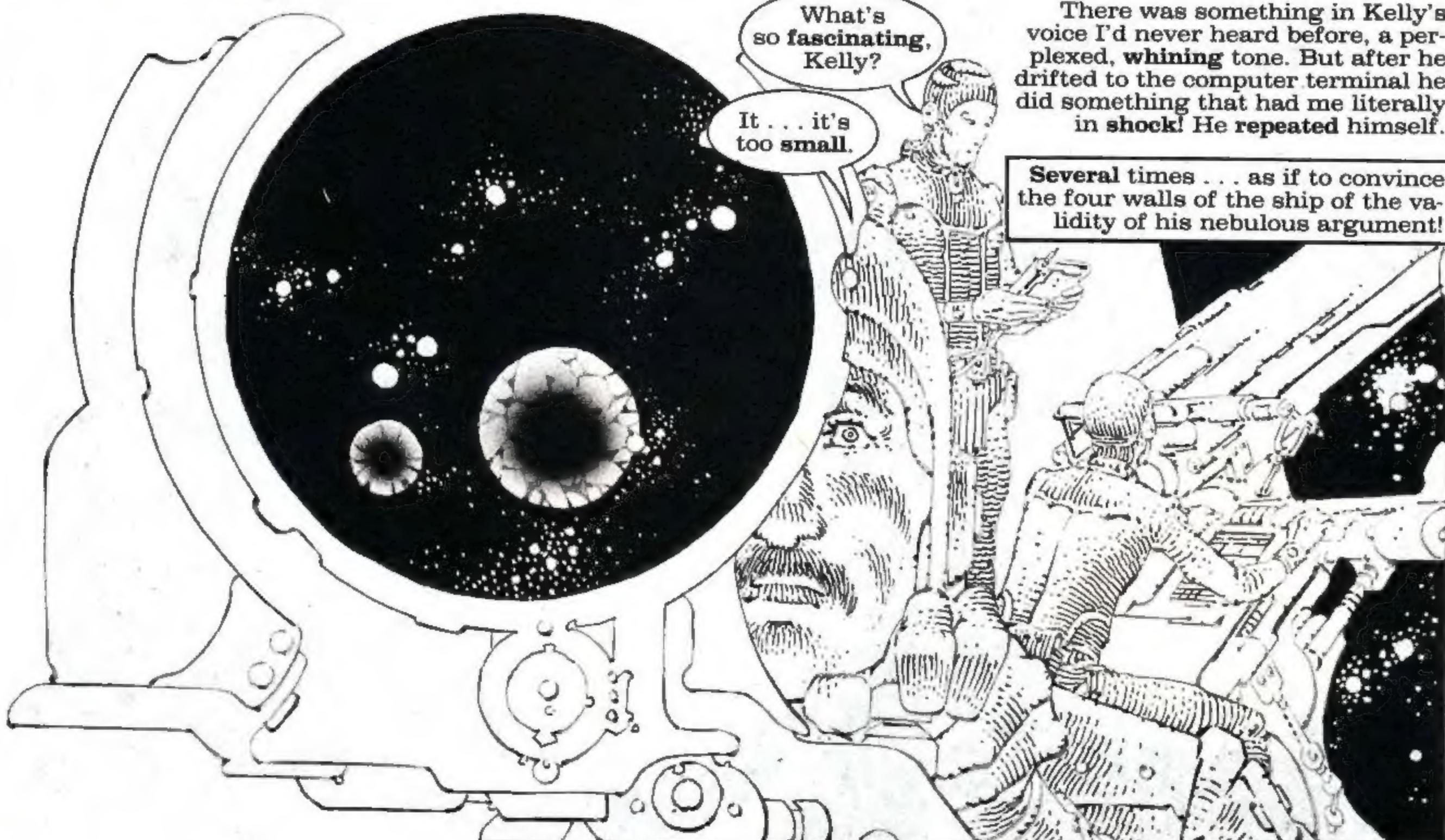
On most of our trips, Kelly had been quiet. He's one of those people who never says much to begin with, unless you were talking shop.

But this trip Kelly was too quiet. Further, he seemed much more nervous than usual. First, he'd stare through the 'scope, then fiddle with his pocketbrain. Kelly was interested in something and that got me nervous.



Deep space is supposed to be dull, but most of the interesting things are exciting.

And most of the exciting things can easily get you killed.

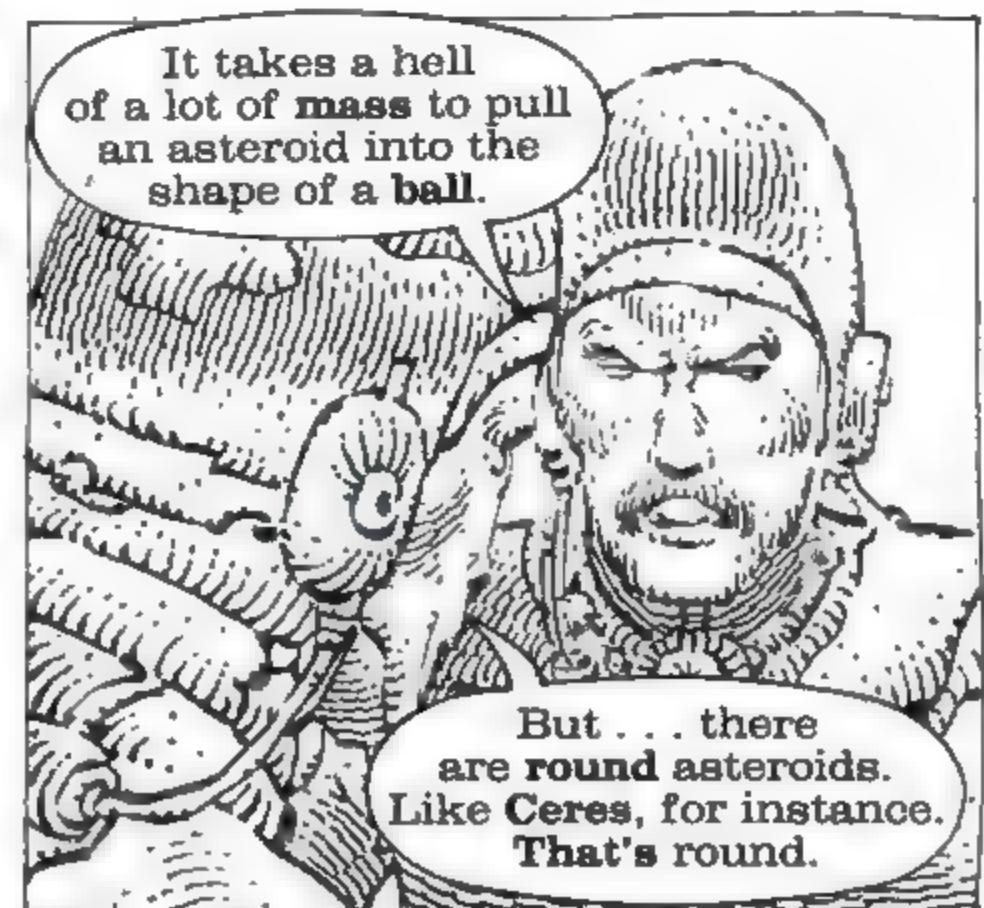
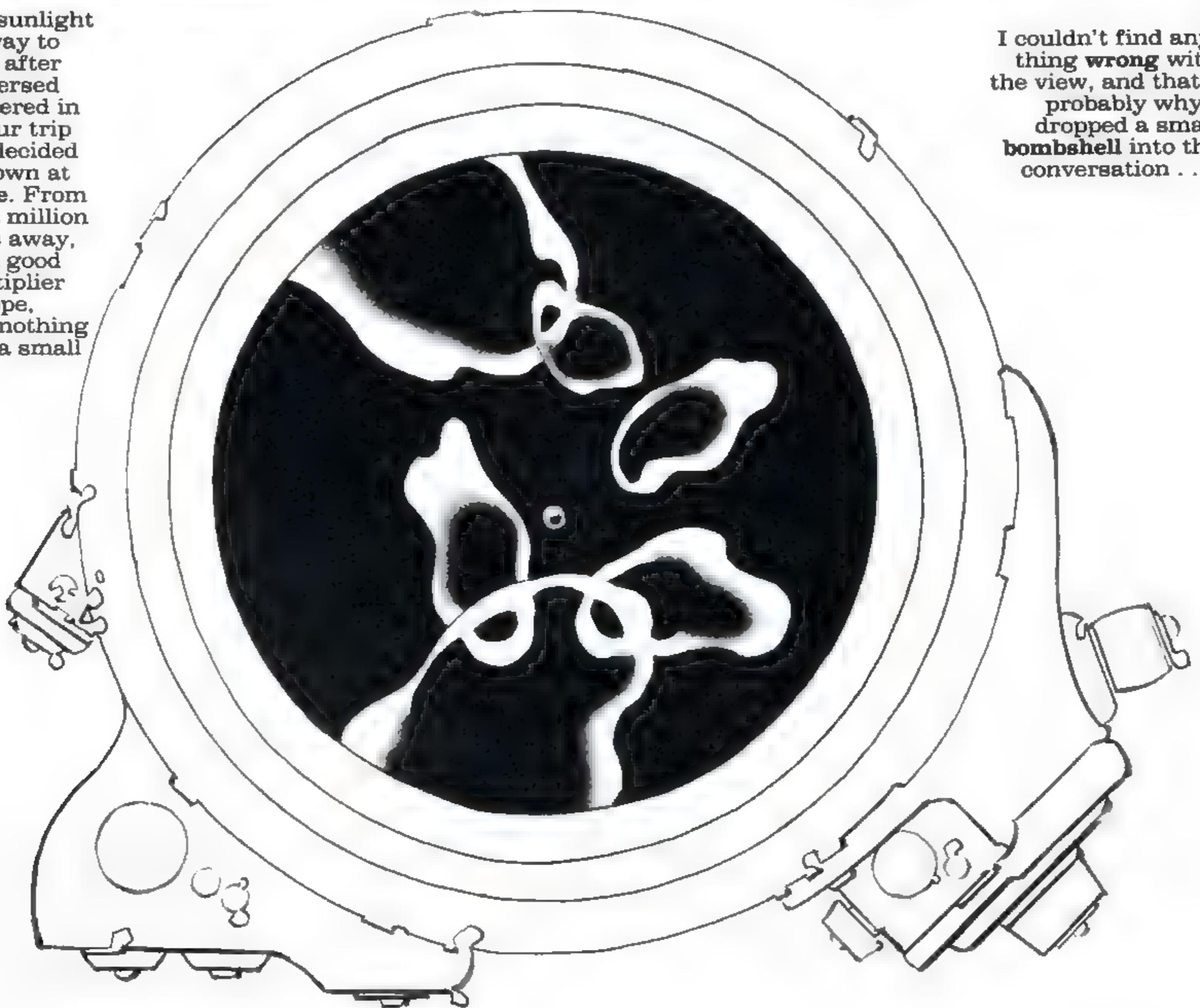




When he finally stopped, he stood still for a moment, then began to peck away at his pocketbrain like a starved vulture. As soon as I was sure he wasn't going to try anything else, like opening the airlock, for a breath of fresh vacuum, I made my way to the 'scope, to catch my first glimpse of the Fluke he was babbling about.

Whatever sunlight made its way to the Fluke, after being dispersed and smothered in its half hour trip from Sol, decided to settle down at the surface. From only half a million kilometers away, and with a good photo-multiplier on the 'scope, there was nothing to see but a small grey ball.

I couldn't find anything wrong with the view, and that's probably why I dropped a small bombshell into the conversation . . . !



Kelly was screaming again, and that was worrying me. With a good hundred million miles between me and the next room, it was no place to discover a friend's newfound unpleasant characteristics!

Its mass we know from the probe, and it was rather massive. But if it's that small, it's going to have to be as dense as pure uranium.

But the damn thing isn't the slightest bit radioactive!

That's fine for Ceres. It has enough mass for gravity. It can pull itself in! But can you tell me how you can pack enough mass into a body that's only three kilometers wide?

I sure as hell can't!

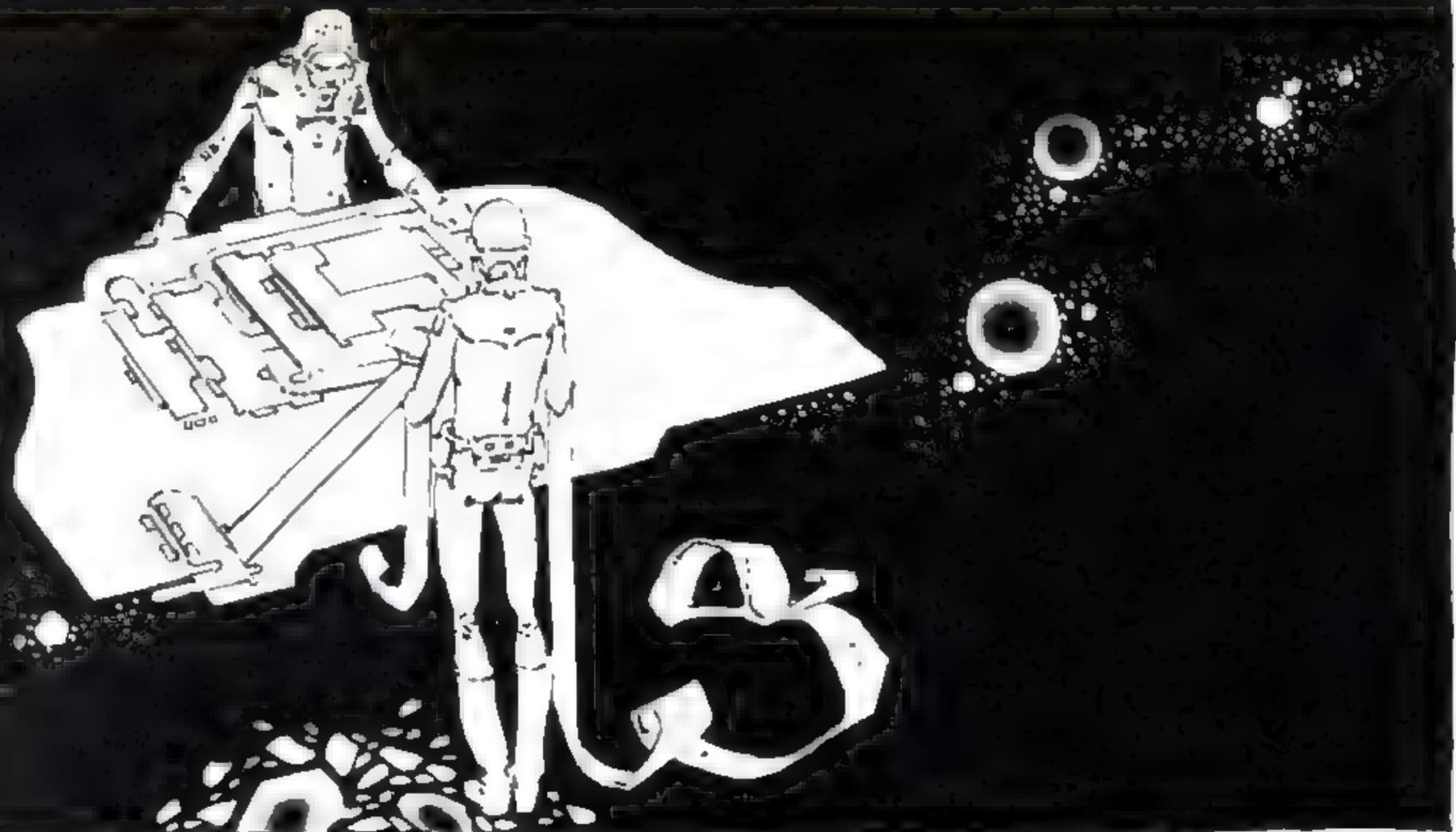
I couldn't move, I couldn't think straight, and that had me terrified. Here was a fellow I've known a good piece of my life . . .

a man who I've seen spend twenty minutes running a mineral sample by hand if he thought the drone's calculations were off.



Here he was, wringing his hands, screaming in an oversized closet of a lifepod, and literally trying to wrench the answers out of the computers. I had every right to be terrified, but I had to keep calm at all costs. It wasn't that easy though, it was getting extremely tempting to yell back at him.

We were stuck. We had no idea what we were heading for. So to calm both of us down, we tried to figure what kind of ugly, nasty things the Fluke couldn't possibly be.



"Neutron star fragment out. Something that big would have been found centuries ago, by its gravitational pull alone!"



"Mini Black Hole out. It would swallow an asteroid like that in an instant, and would be radioactive as all get out!"



"Alien Artifact come off it! I could think up a dozen different places to put one where they'd be as hard to reach. Hmm... sadistic aliens!"



TABLE OF ELEMENTS

Element Symbol At No. Weight Configuration Abundance

Hydrogen H 1 1.007 1s¹

Helium He 2 4.003 1s²

Lithium Li 3 7.016 2s¹

Boron B 5 10.81 2s² 2p¹

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Nitrogen N 7 14.012 2s² 2p³

Oxygen O 8 16.000 2s² 2p⁴

Fluorine F 9 19.000 2s² 2p⁵

Neon Ne 10 20.180 2s² 2p⁶

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Aluminum Al 13 26.982 3s² 3p¹

Silicon Si 14 28.086 3s² 3p²

Phosphorus P 15 30.974 3s² 3p³

Sulfur S 16 32.065 3s² 3p⁴

Chlorine Cl 17 35.453 3s² 3p⁵

Argon Ar 18 39.902 3s² 3p⁶

Krypton Kr 36 83.80 3s² 3p⁶ 3d¹⁰ 4s²

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Fracton Fr 87 223.00 3s² 3p⁶ 3d¹⁰ 4s² 4p⁶ 5s²

Super Heavy, but stable elements were our best bet. It was unusual, but nowhere near as weird as any of the others.

Element Symbol At No. Weight Configuration Abundance

Ununtrium Uut 91 225.00 5s² 5p⁶

Ununpentium Uup 95 244.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s²

Ununhexium Uuh 96 257.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s²

Ununseptium Uus 97 264.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s²

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Ununoctium Uo 105 298.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s²

Ununoctium Uo 106 302.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s²

Ununoctium Uo 107 306.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s²

Ununoctium Uo 108 310.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s²

Ununoctium Uo 109 314.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s²

Ununoctium Uo 110 318.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s²

Ununoctium Uo 111 322.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s²

Ununoctium Uo 112 326.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s²

Ununoctium Uo 113 330.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s²

Ununoctium Uo 114 334.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s² 25s²

Ununoctium Uo 115 338.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s² 25s² 26s²

Ununoctium Uo 116 342.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s² 25s² 26s² 27s²

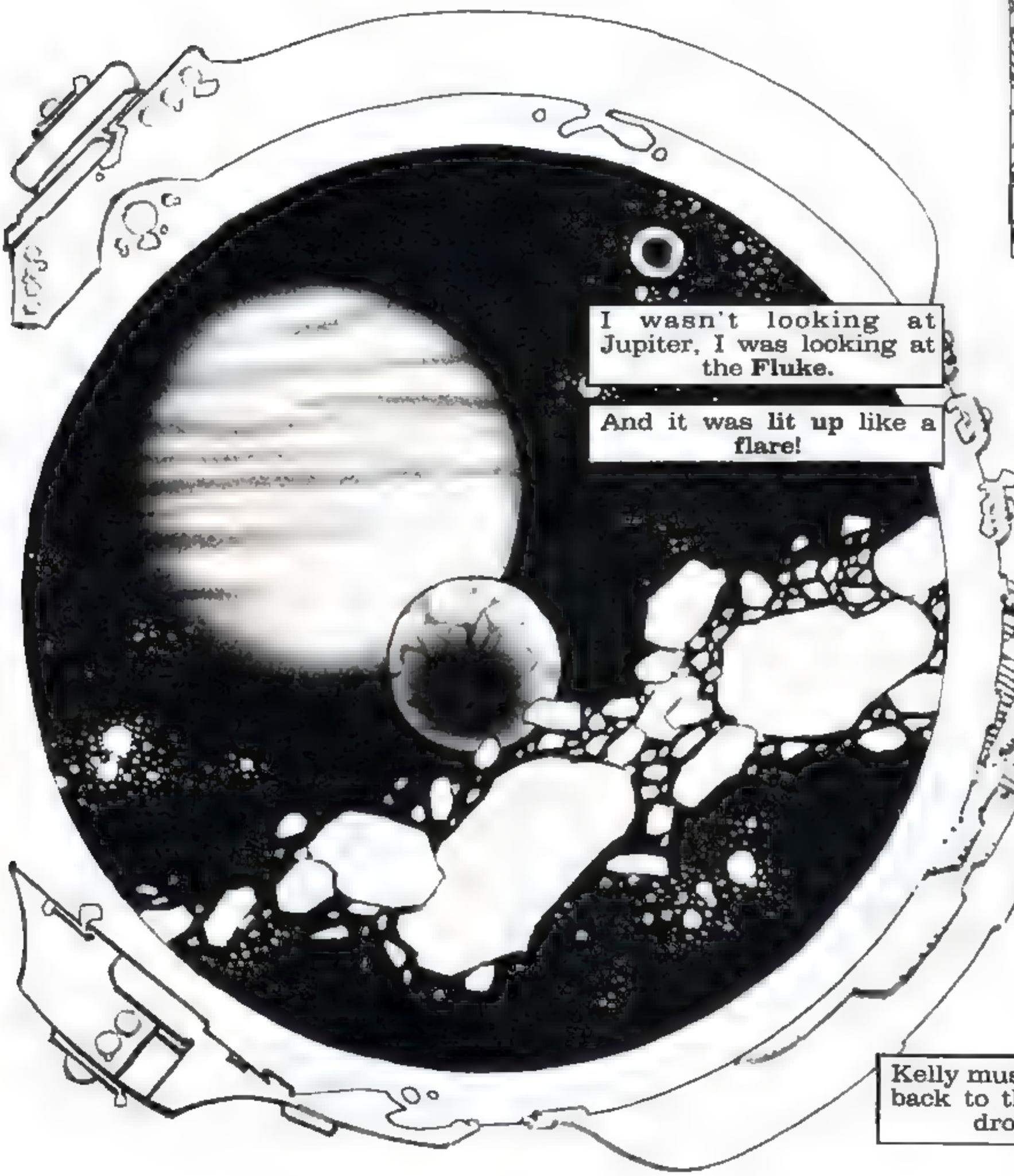
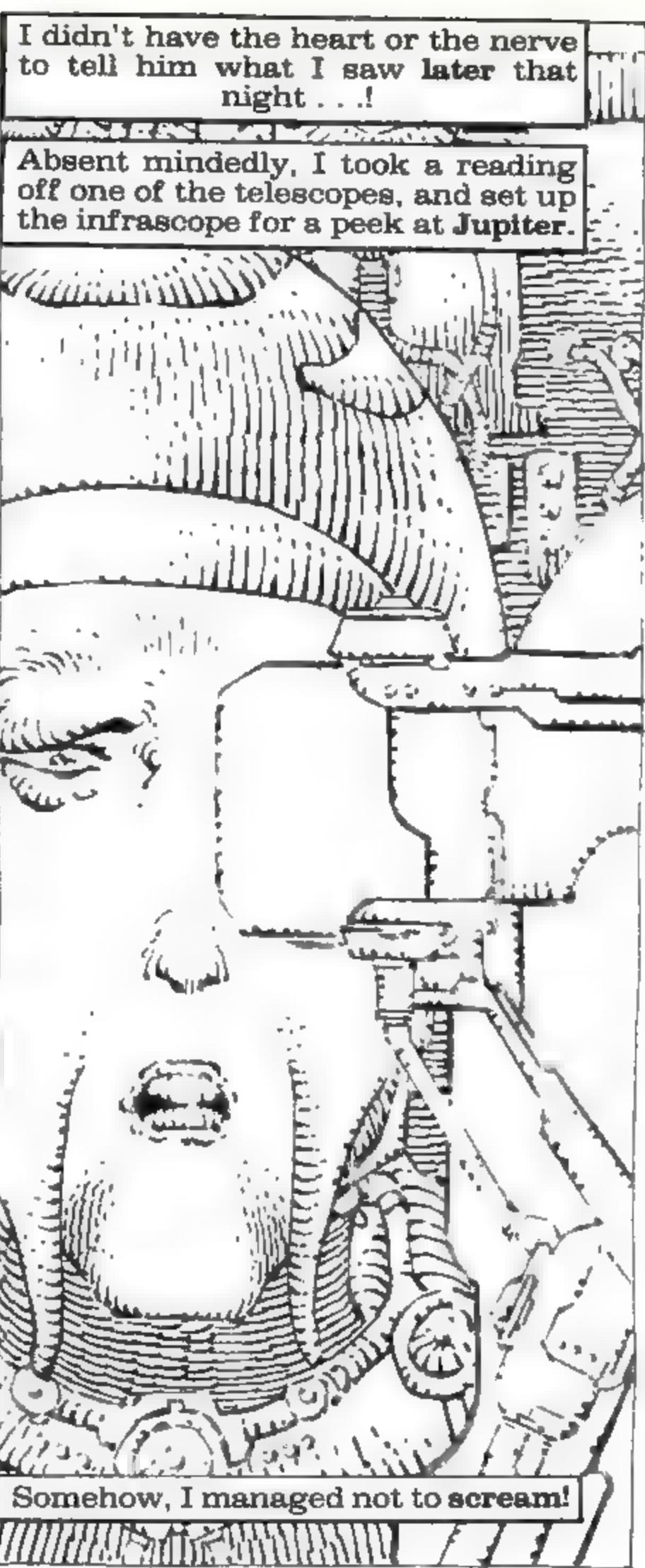
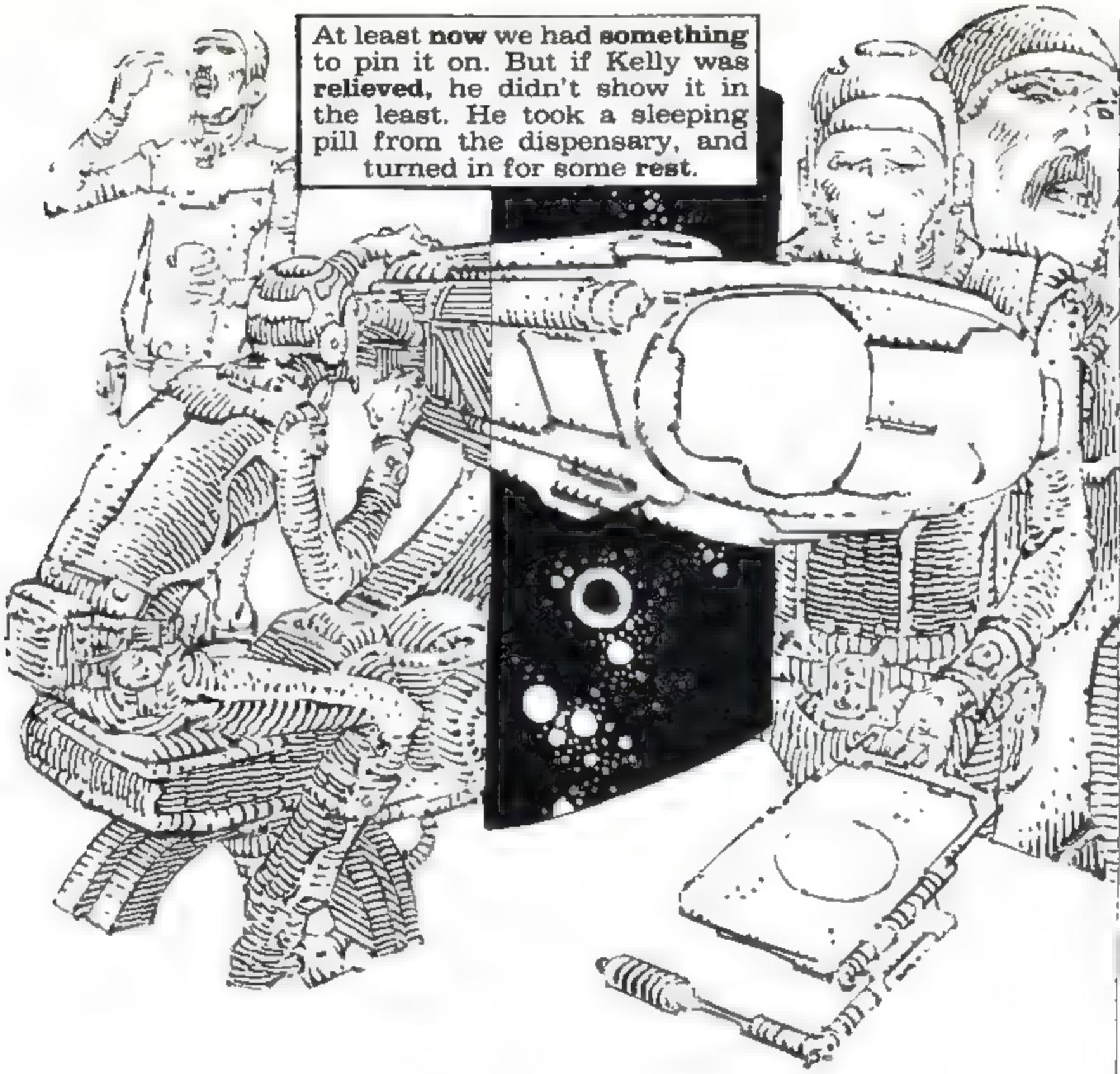
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Ununoctium Uo 118 350.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s² 25s² 26s² 27s² 28s² 29s²

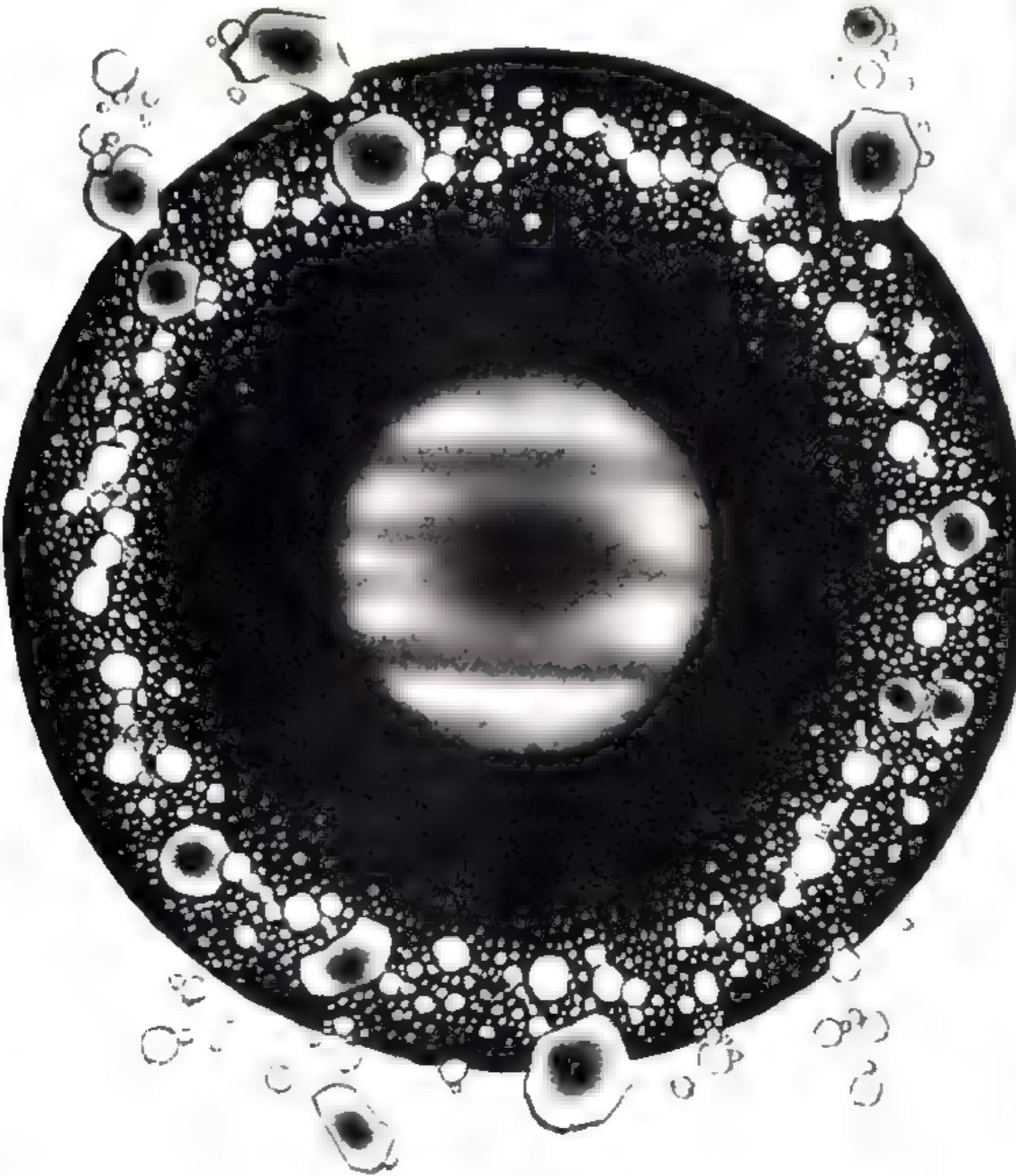
Ununoctium Uo 119 354.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s² 25s² 26s² 27s² 28s² 29s² 30s²

Ununoctium Uo 120 358.00 5s² 5p⁶ 6s² 7s² 8s² 9s² 10s² 11s² 12s² 13s² 14s² 15s² 16s² 17s² 18s² 19s² 20s² 21s² 22s² 23s² 24s² 25s² 26s² 27s² 28s² 29s² 30s² 31s²

Ununoctium Uo 121 362

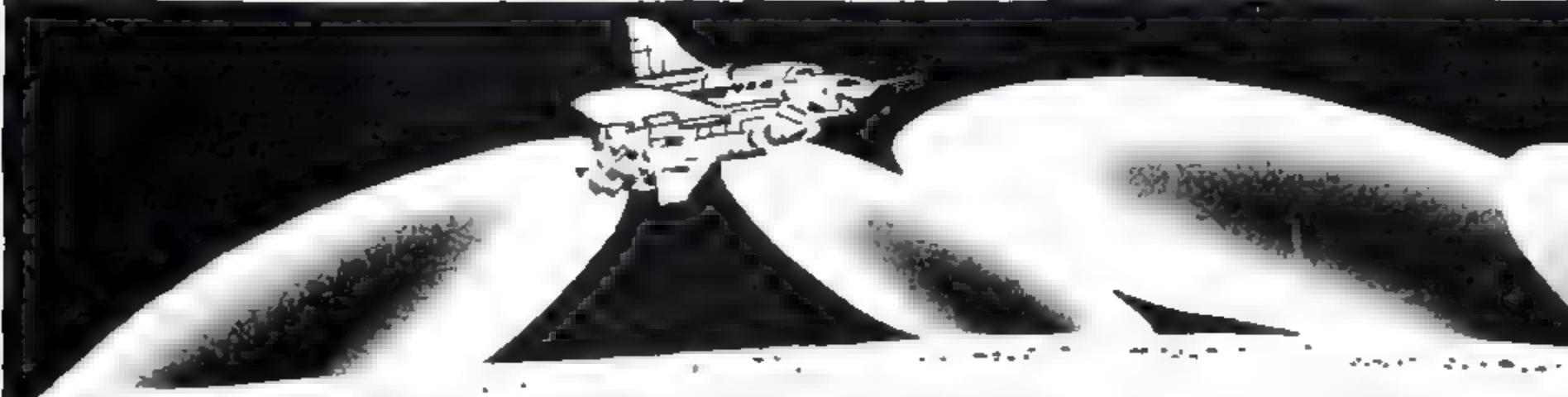


There are two major theories on how the asteroids formed . . . !



One is that the tiny fragments could never settle into a single large body due to the gravitational effects of Jupiter . . . !

Either way, it happened a long time ago.



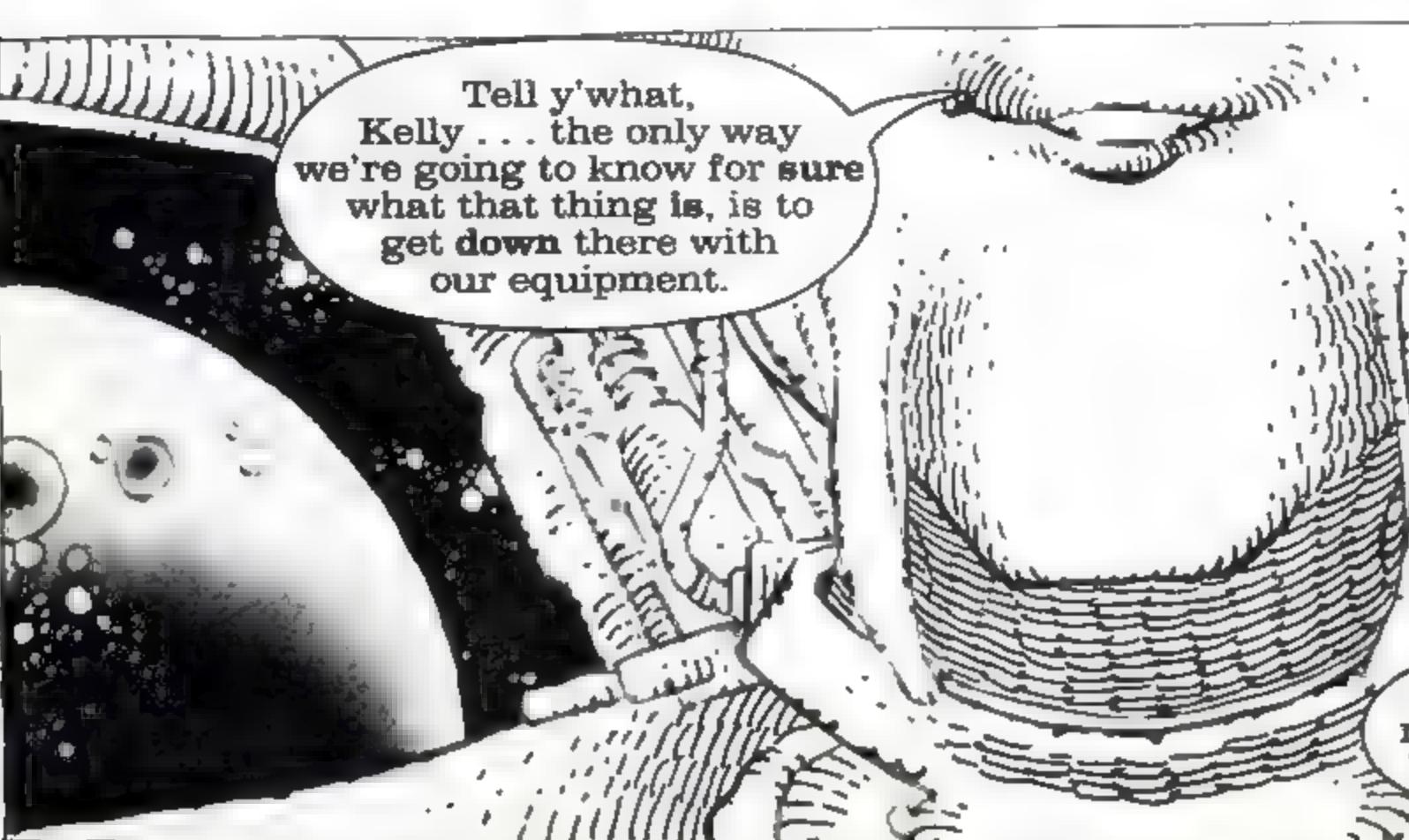
Tell y'what, Kelly . . . the only way we're going to know for sure what that thing is, is to get down there with our equipment.

The other is that a planet had ended its existence in a spectacle fit for one of the old fashioned comic books.

Long enough so that any rock that didn't have its own supply of heat from radionuclides should be stone cold by now.

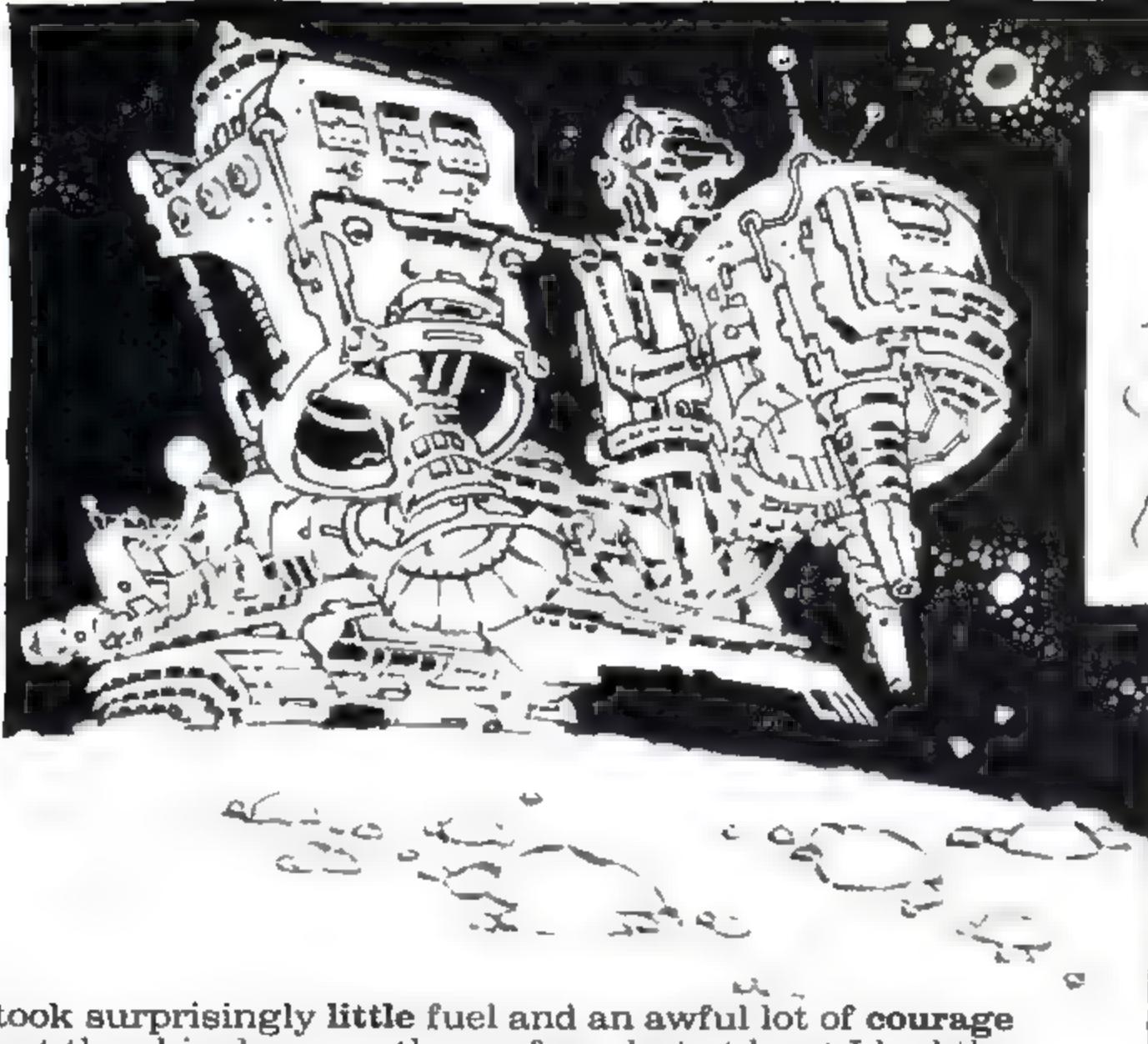
So why was this tiny rock, which by all rights should be made of some Godly unknown material, be so warm? Until we peppered the surface with a shot of reaction mass, antimatter was still a possibility.

I was sure that the Fluke was not that weird.



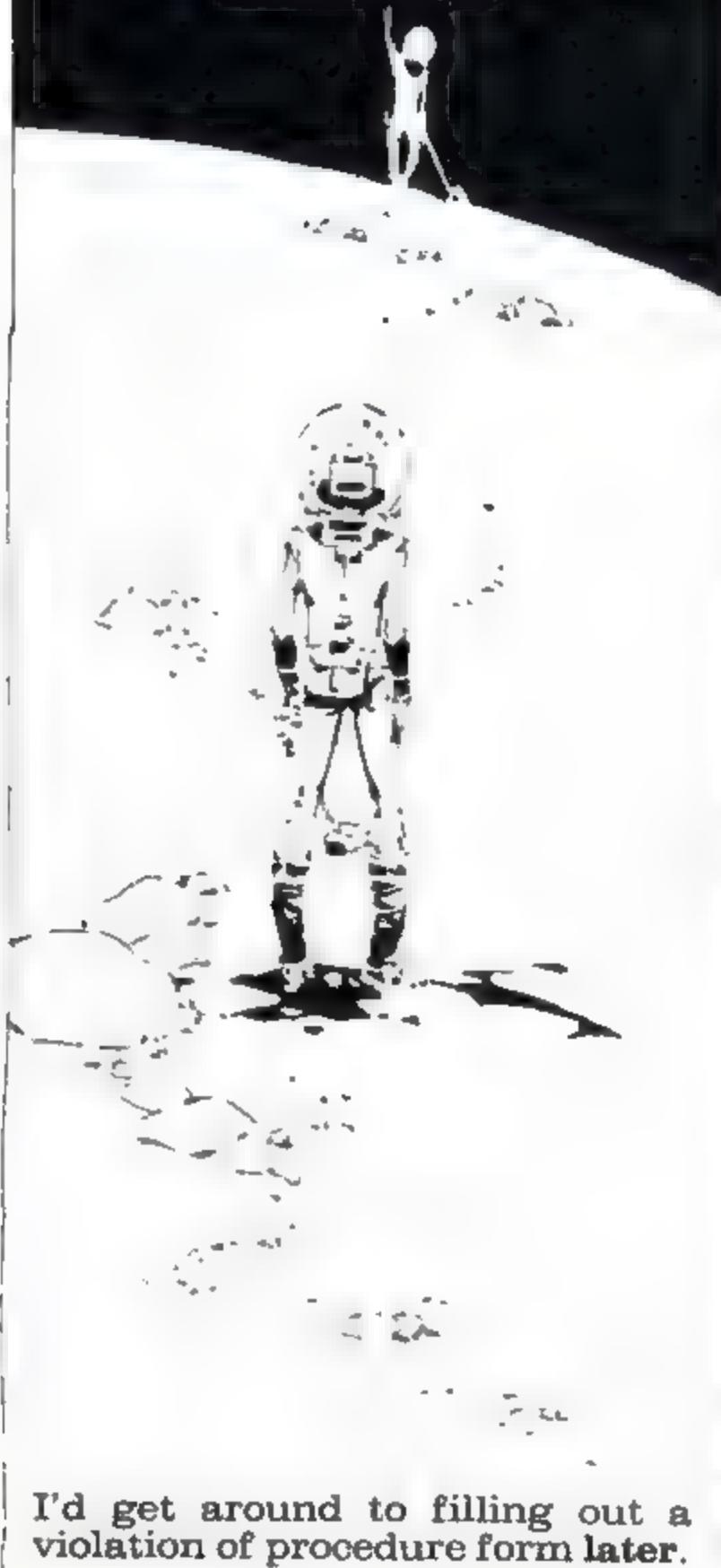
I can smell my insurance policy burning from here.





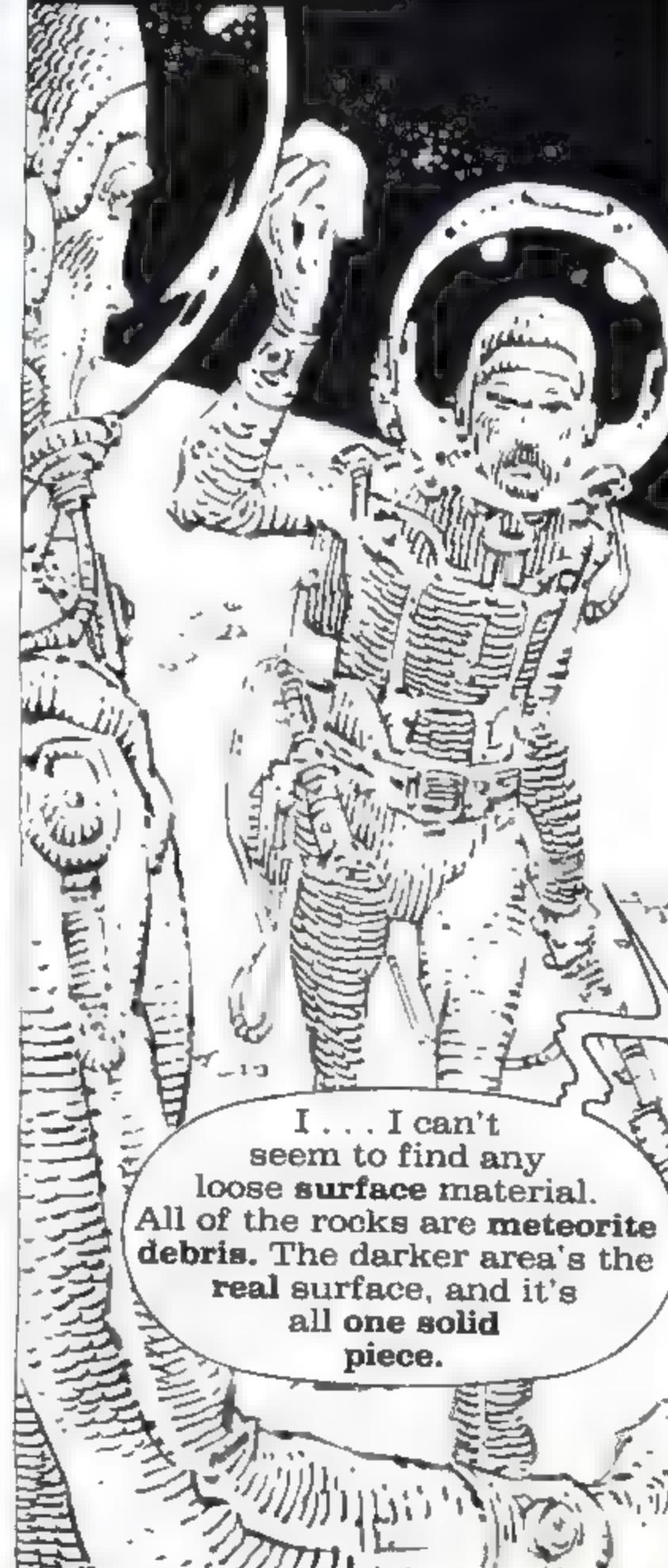
It took surprisingly little fuel and an awful lot of courage to set the ship down on the surface, but at least I had the whole lump mapped before landing. As we were taking our map survey, we added a few more oddities to our growing list of tourist attractions. . . !

The first thing I did was to have Kelly drop off the two drones on the other side of the planetoid with the laser drill. Operating a drill usually requires one human for supervision. But Kelly and I had better things to do with our time. Besides, if I did misprogram them, and by some error in timing the damn thing blew up, I didn't want to be anywhere near it.



I'd get around to filling out a violation of procedure form later.

Upon returning, Kelly wouldn't leave sight of the ship, and had only stopped on the way back to pick up a few loose samples. In the process, he added another fluke to our Fluke.



To start, it wasn't a perfect ball. There were minor bulges here and there. It rotated a bit too rapidly for rocks its size. But when we charted the craters and scars, and assorted cosmic acne, we found a real oddity for the Fluke.

Not one crater, blemish, or whatever, went into the surface more than two feet.



I've never heard of anything that could do that!

Nothing in nature. But I've heard of superpressure plastics that might. Still, they wouldn't be lying around here, would they?

Don't bet on it!

I kicked a small rock over a small hill, and suddenly found that I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see something short of a Lilliputian bringing it back over the gray hills and under the violet sky.

Violet sky?

The sky in space is not the deep blue of Earth or any colony world, but a sheer, deep, obsidian black. It takes an atmosphere to haze sunlight enough to blue up a sky, and there was no way the Fluke

... Oh, the hell with it!

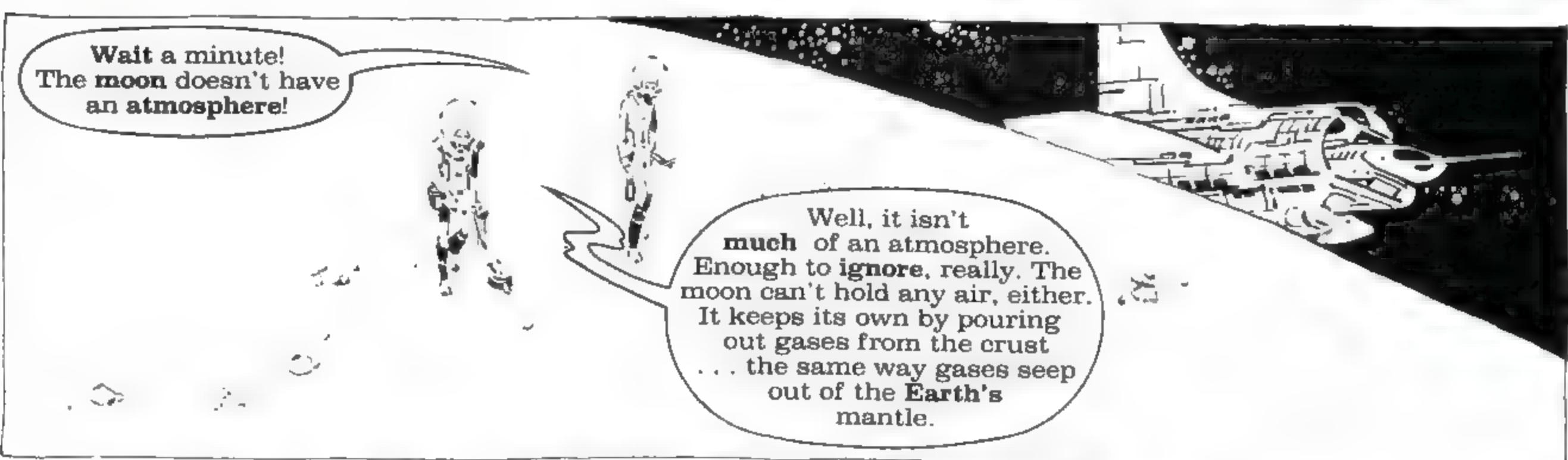
Kelly!

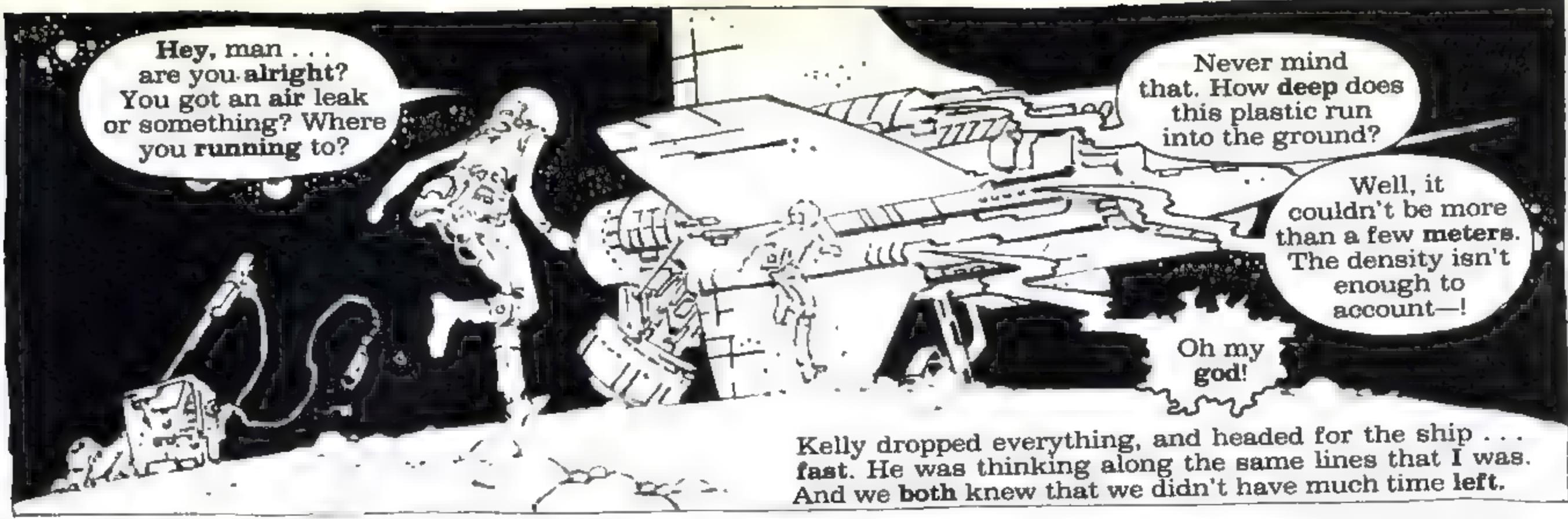
Now, don't get nervous, Kelly, but could a rock this small hold an atmosphere?

Now that's impossible. It'd blow away in a matter of hours.

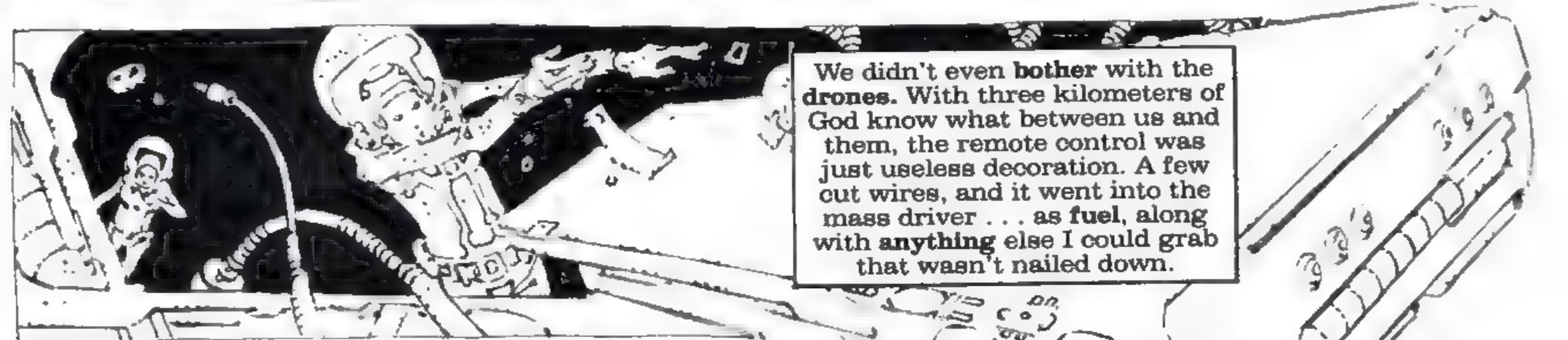
Gaaa! I think I see what you're getting at!

Lemme get some equipment from the ship! Never thought we'd be needing a barometer out here. . . .





Kelly dropped everything, and headed for the ship... fast. He was thinking along the same lines that I was. And we both knew that we didn't have much time left.

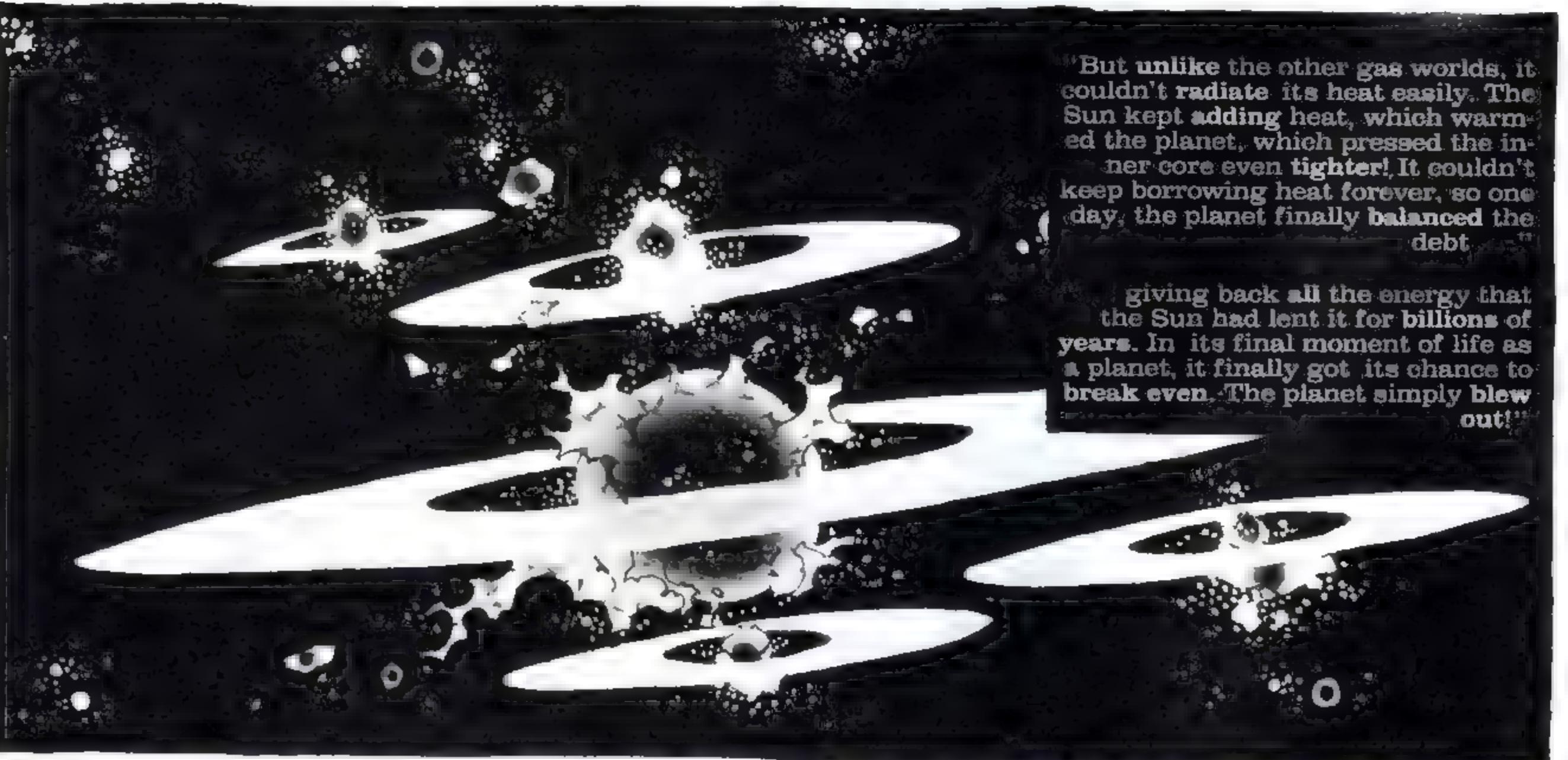
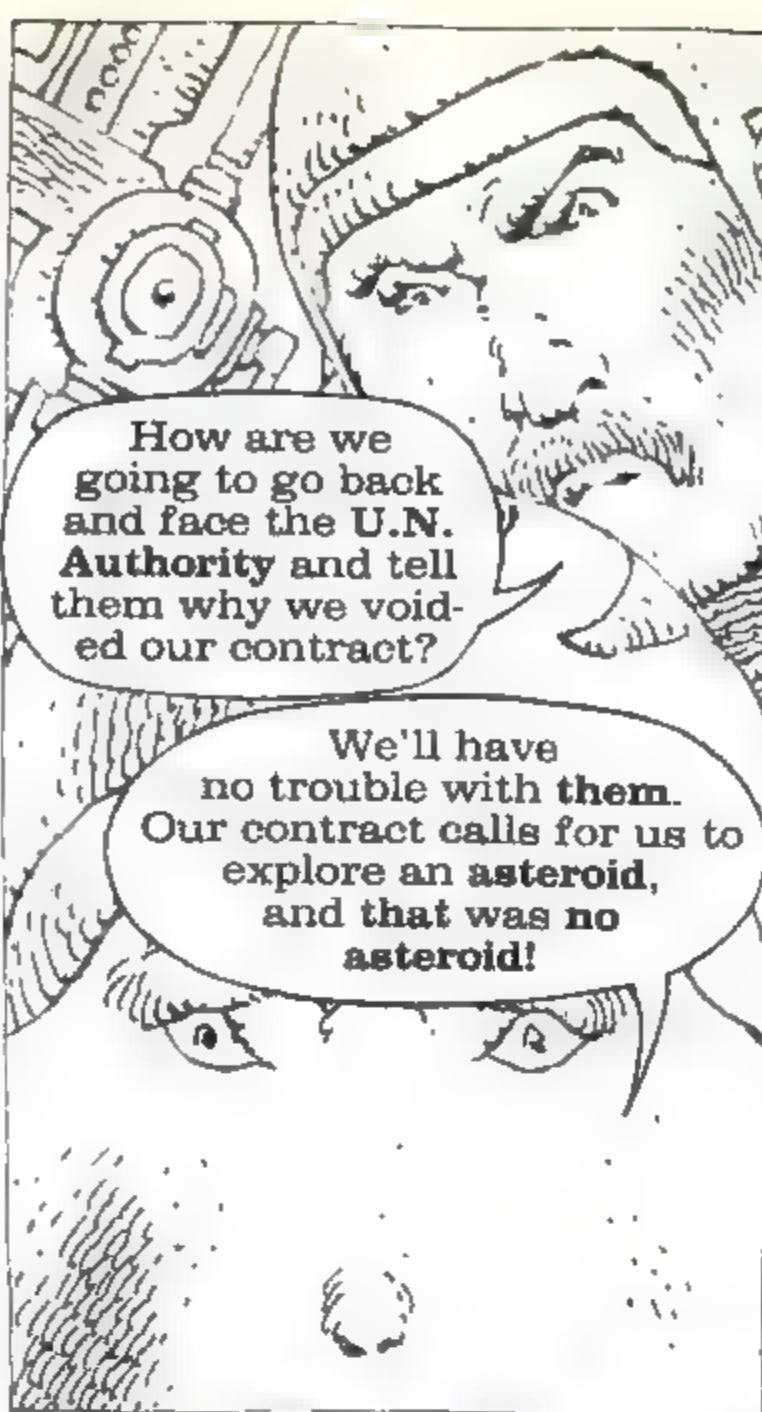
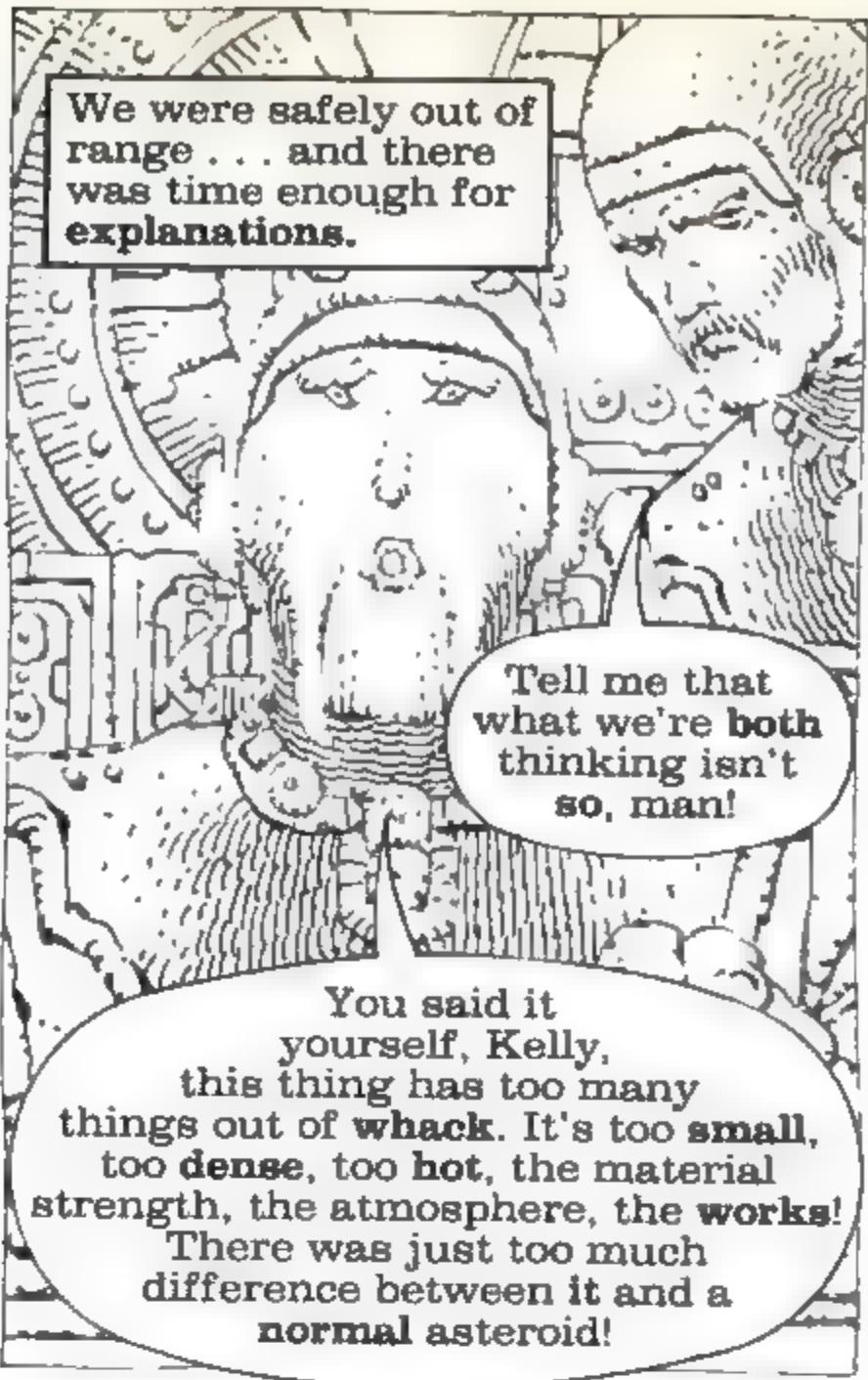


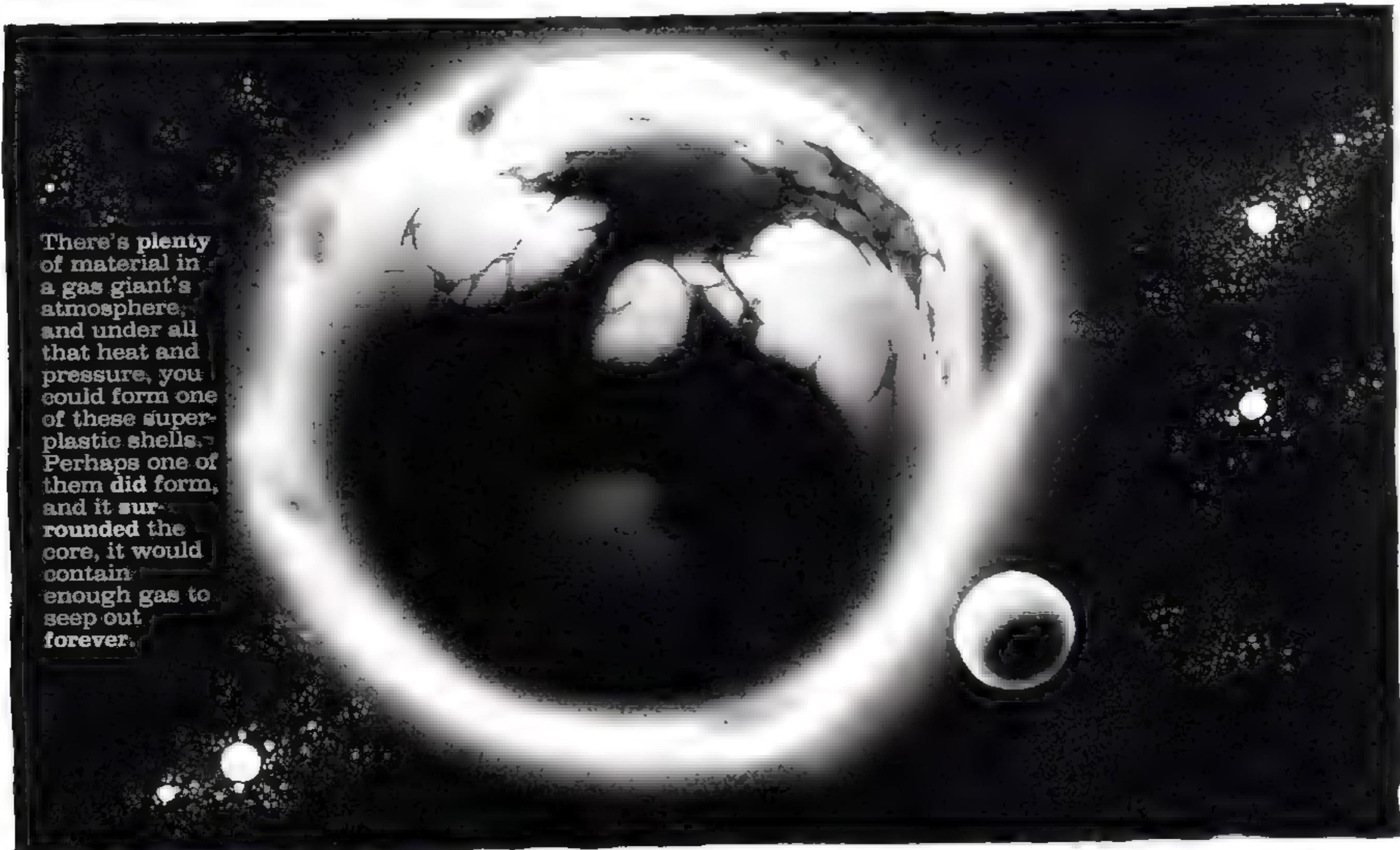
Kelly strapped in without even taking off his suit, which showed some brains, if not actual grace.



We took off hard, and kept on going at six gees for at least ten minutes.









To say it was impressive would be a lie. If all the hazy, multicolored nebulae were allowed to escape into the night through a pinhole as a tiny ball grows white hot and explodes like a hellfire incarnate, it would be describing only a tiny part of the experience.

When the shock wave hit us, we could hear, from ten thousand miles away, through the super-thin air outside, the shriek of a dying planet.

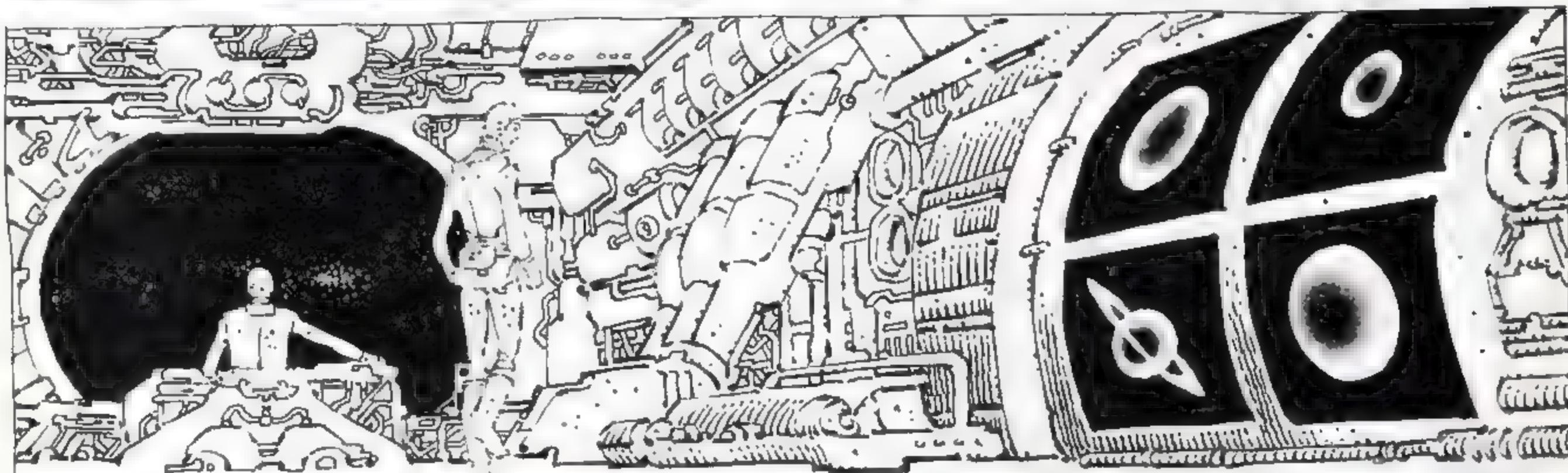


Kelly didn't move for nearly an hour after the explosion. I'm sure, though, that he was one of the happiest humans in creation. On his scanners, and in our minds, was a view of a place where even the finest achievements of Man cannot penetrate . . . the core of a mammoth world.

Then again, is he happy?
Maybe I'm wrong.

Perhaps all the giant worlds are unstable. If the gas giants, the true planets compared with the dustballs that Men dwell on, aren't stable bodies, then sooner or later, one by one, they too will repay the debt to the star they circle, leaving only debris and dust behind.

And that would truly be a shame!



Kelly keeps a few pictures of the gas giants by his bunk, nowdays. And whenever he passes them, you know what he's thinking, even if he doesn't say it . . .

. . . one down . . .
four to go . . .

Oh, wise and benevolent one, you look as though the weight of Allah's mountain is upon your back.

It is so, faithful Kato. For nigh onto a fortnight my nubian princesses have failed to accord me the corporeal homage which is rightfully mine.

And my beauteous bride-to-be, Herma, has been here for weeks and has refused to come to my bed even once!

Would that this lowly sewer grub not have to tell you, my liege . . . ! I have heard the whispers of your royal consorts . . . !

It is said that the Viking Princess prefers feminine favors over masculine firmament.

Her corrupt ways are turning the royal wives against you.

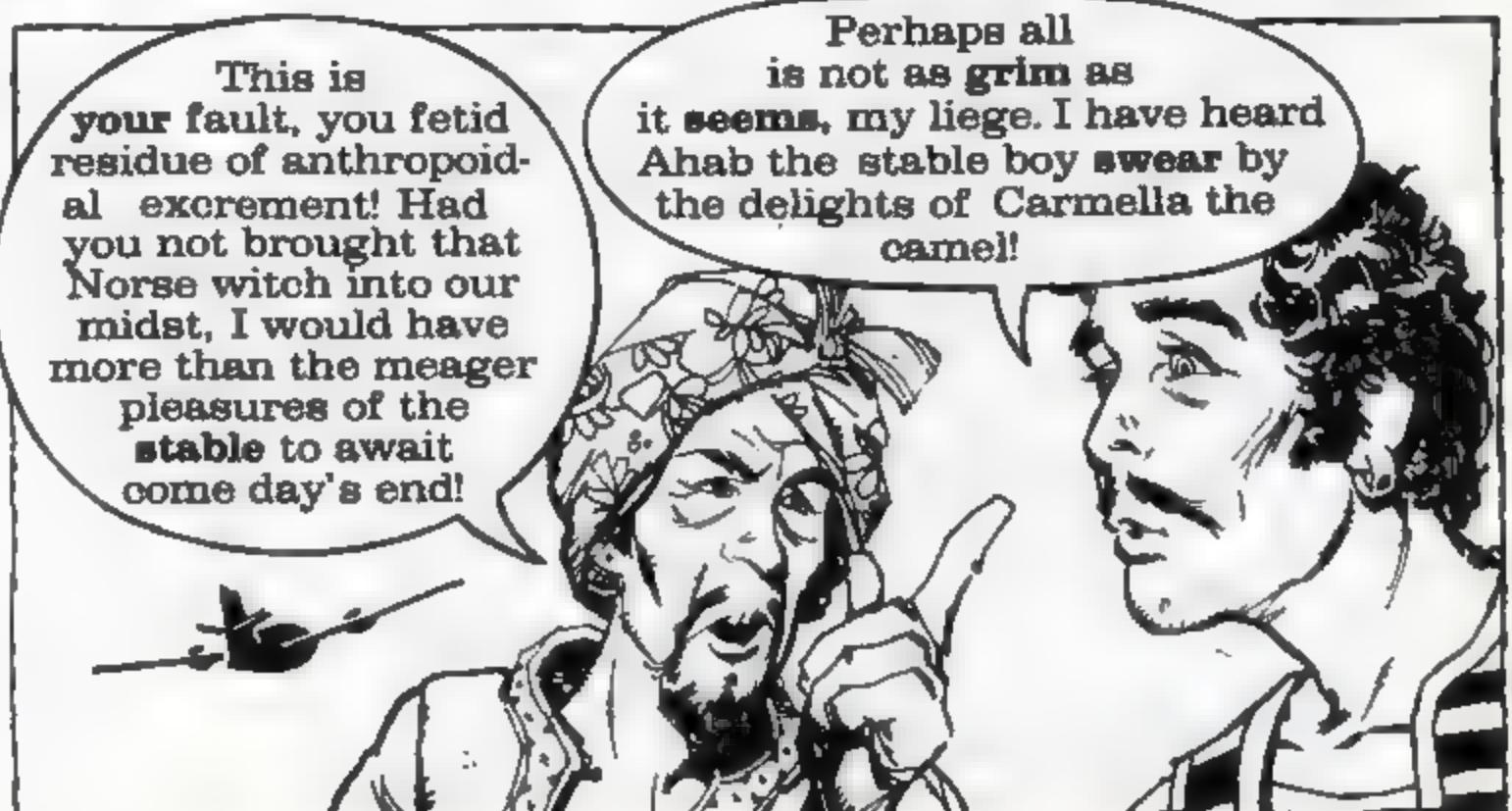
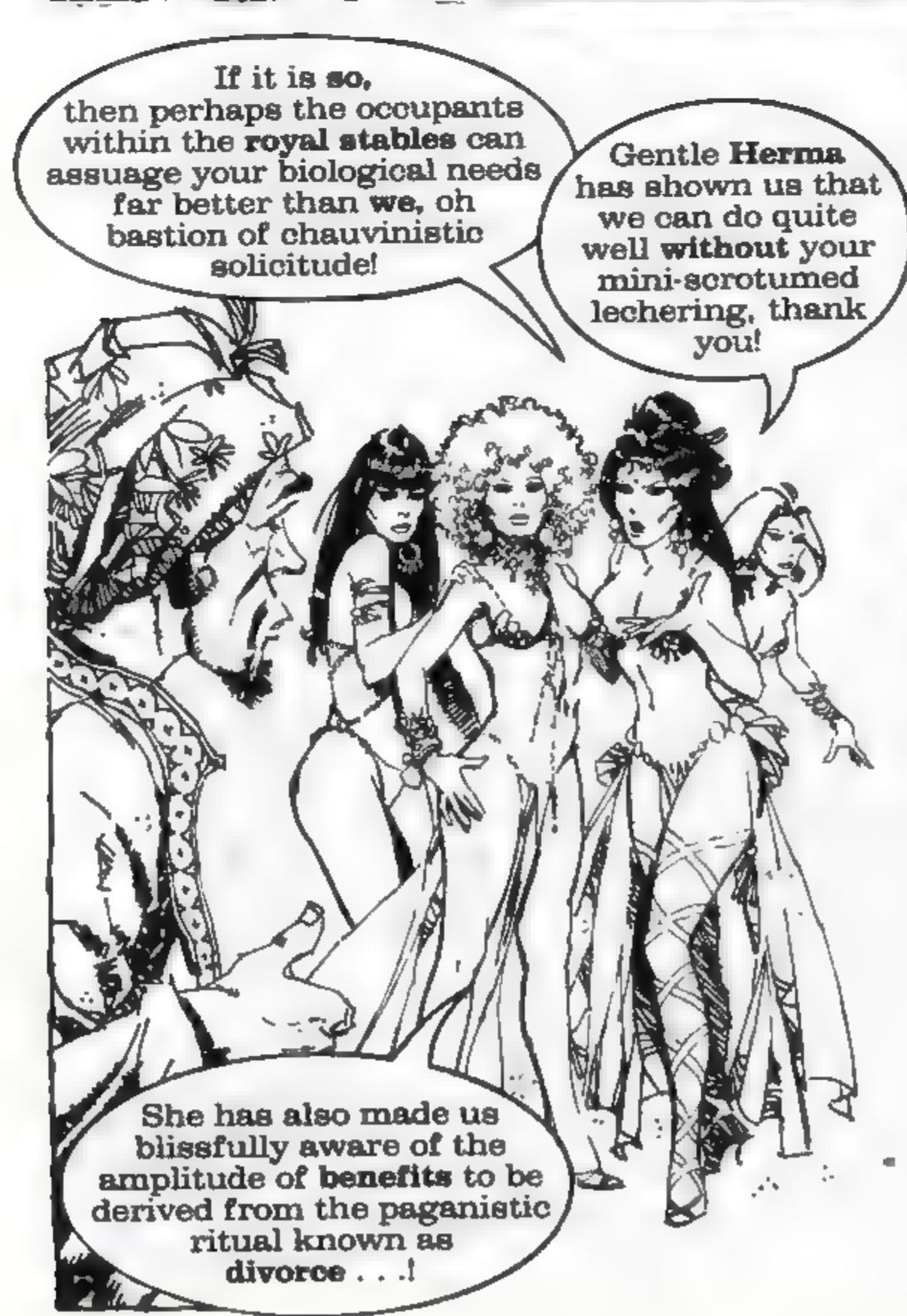
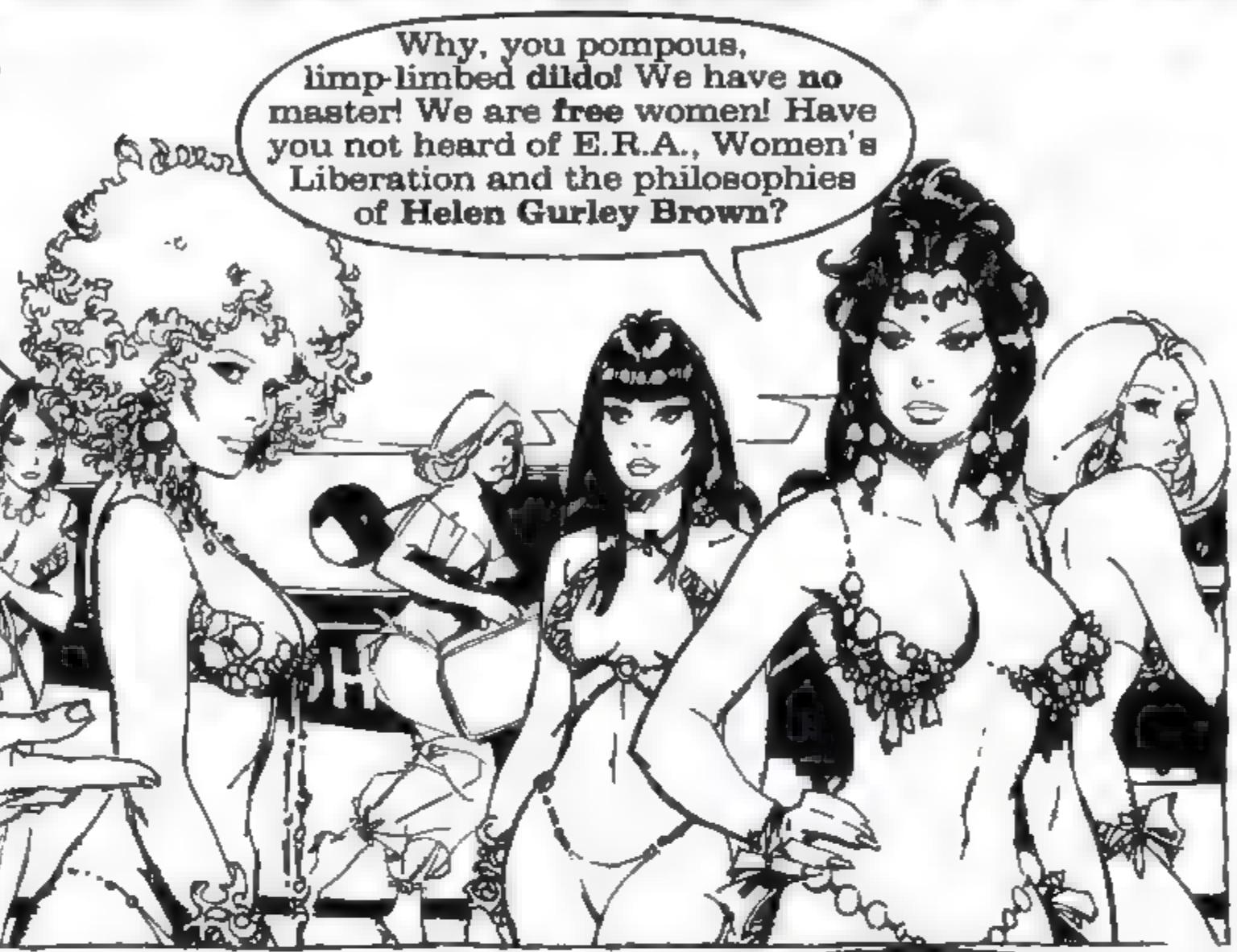
N-no! It cannot be! I must see with my own eyes!

Frozen within a solid wall of ice for a thousand years, a legendary Norse Princess rises again to wreak havoc and spread her lascivious sins throughout the morally bankrupt world of 1984 . . . and in particular the tiny but opulent shiekdom of Ali Khan Sade.

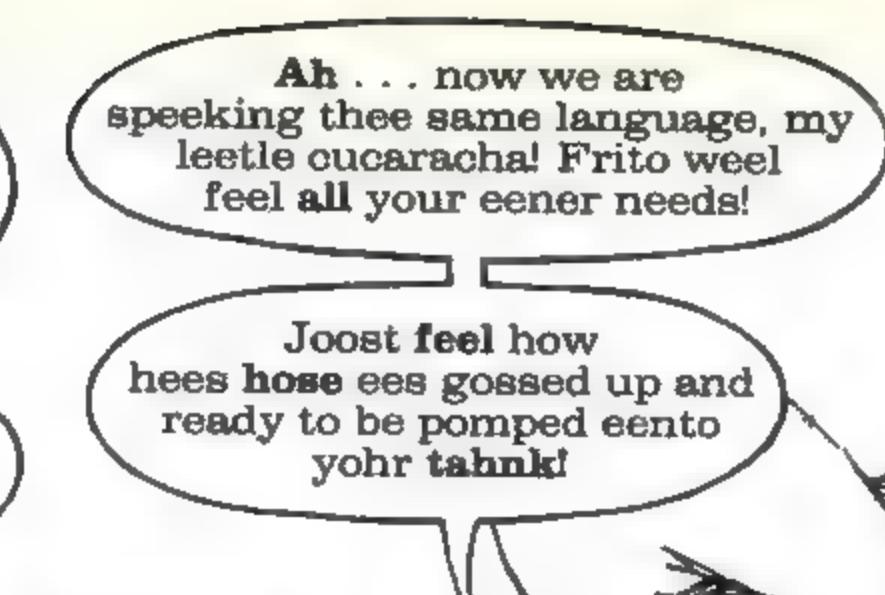
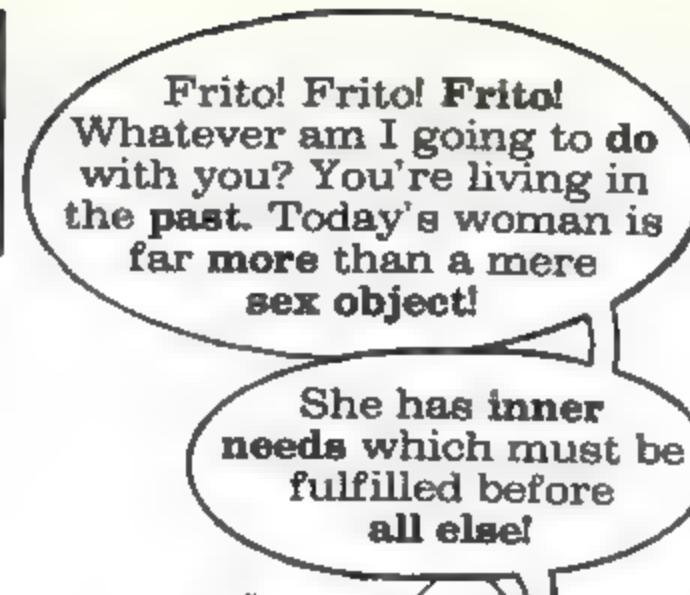
Oh, Herma . . . ! Show me again the forty-nine positions of the Valhalla Kama Sutra.

Take me, Princess . . . me!

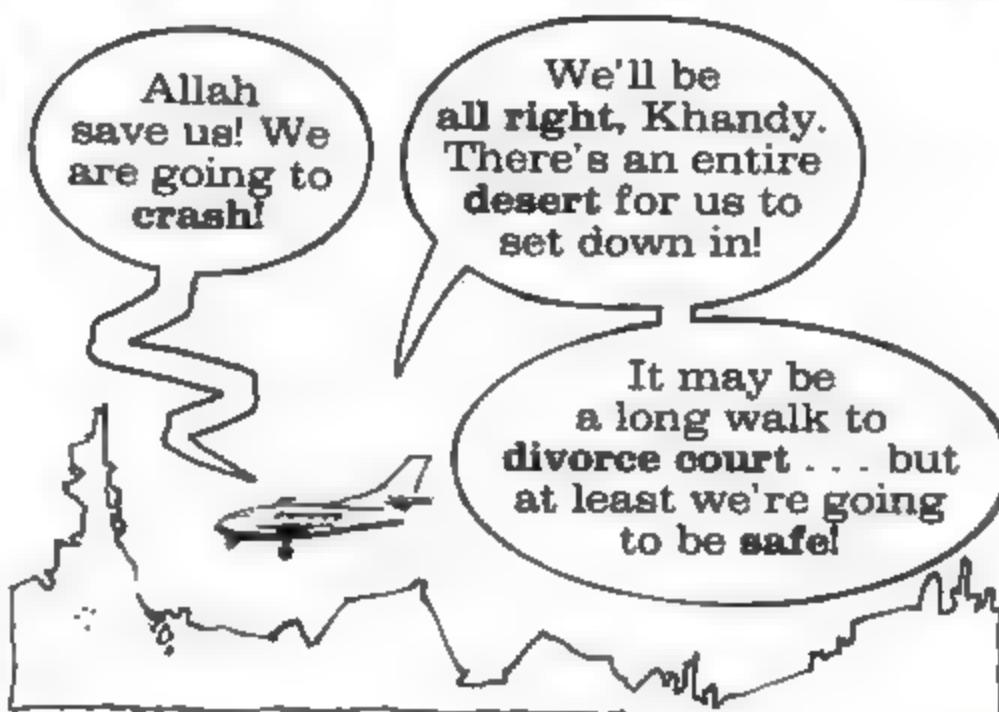
No! It is my turn, Herma!



Some time later, on the parched sands of Mexico's Vaya con Dios desert, another argument concerning a woman's dubious duties rages like a torrential hellfire within an anachronistic settlement.



I did not
realize that this flying
hotel would not have the
capacity to take us
all the way into
Mexico City.

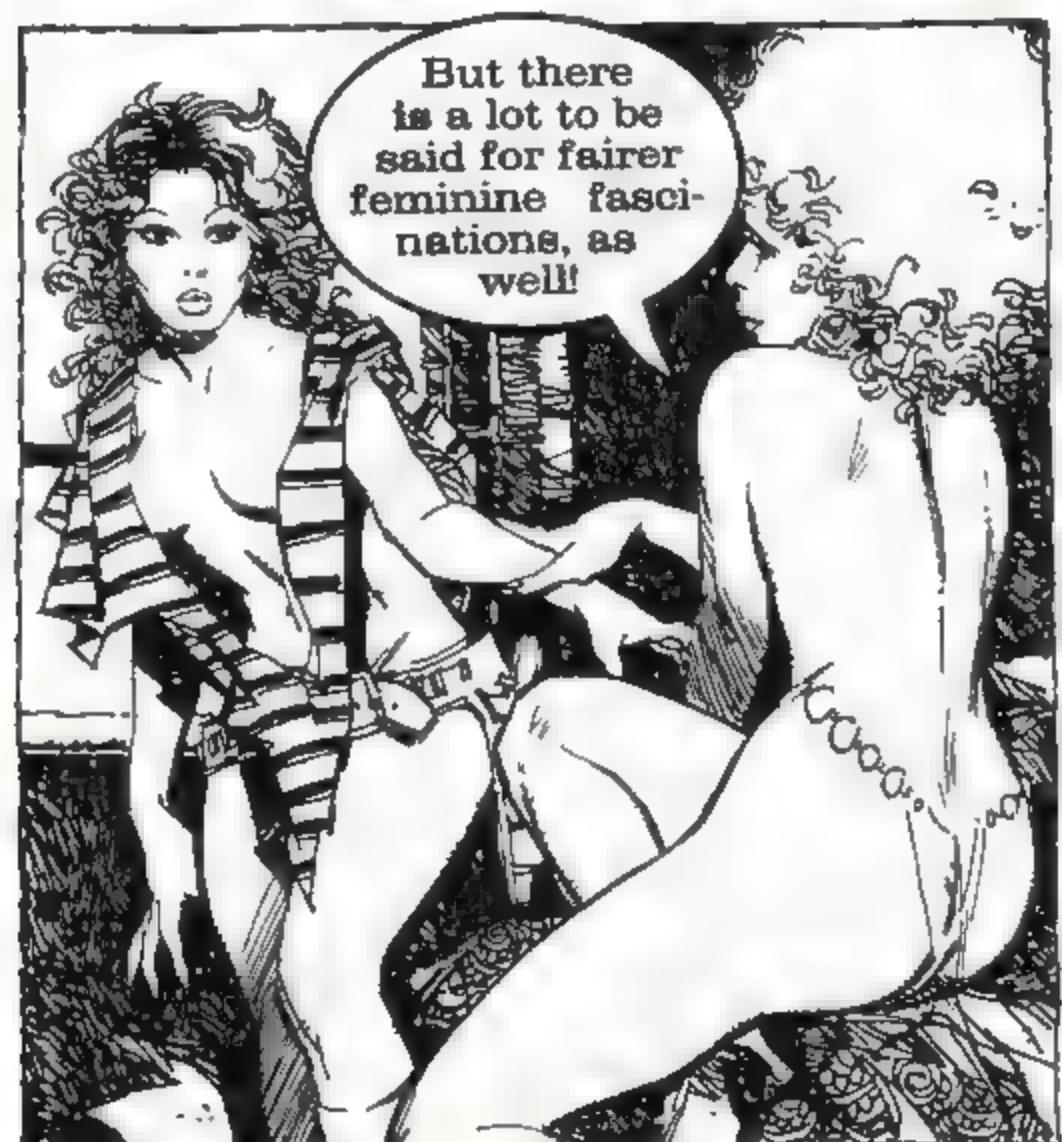
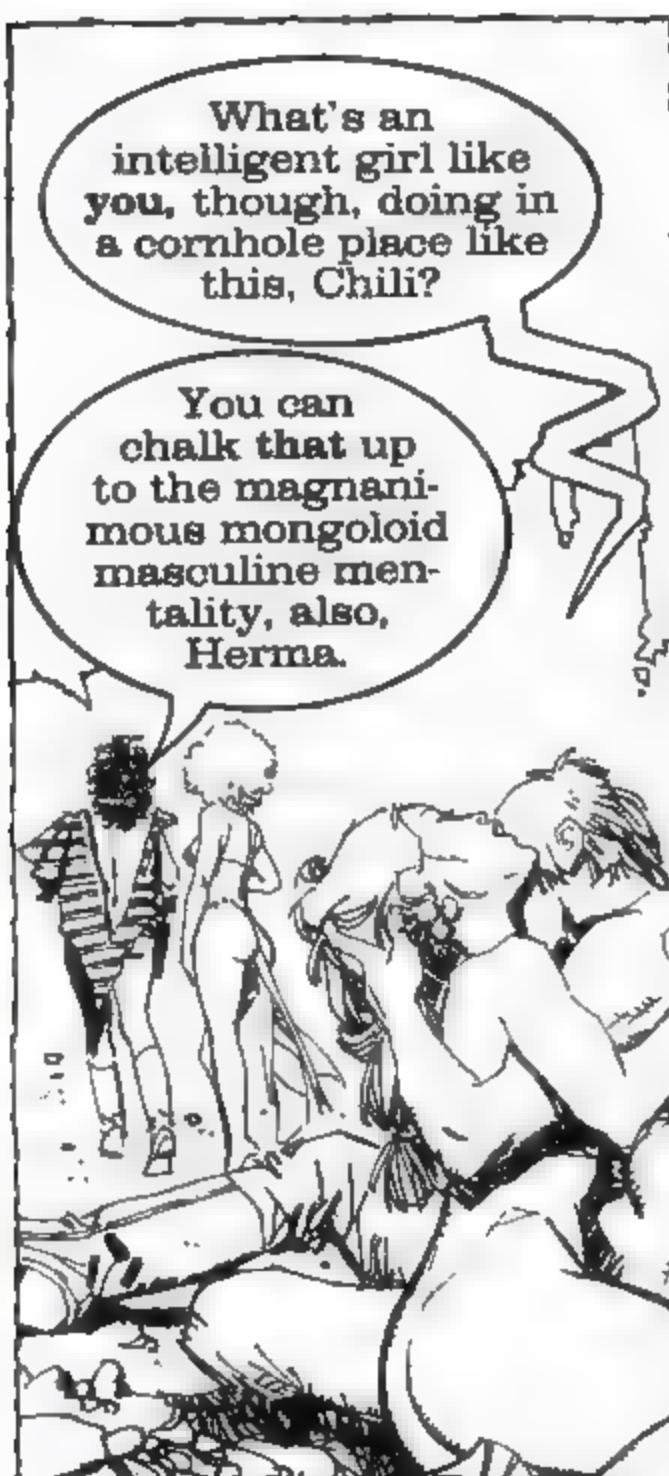


We'll be
all right, Khandy.
There's an entire
desert for us to
set down in!

It may be
a long walk to
divorce court... but
at least we're going
to be safe!



It does not take long for introductions and for the ex-concubines and the bawdy banditos to realize that they have almost nothing in common. Yet, that seems to matter little, for each has found a minor diversion with which to keep him or herself pleasantly preoccupied.

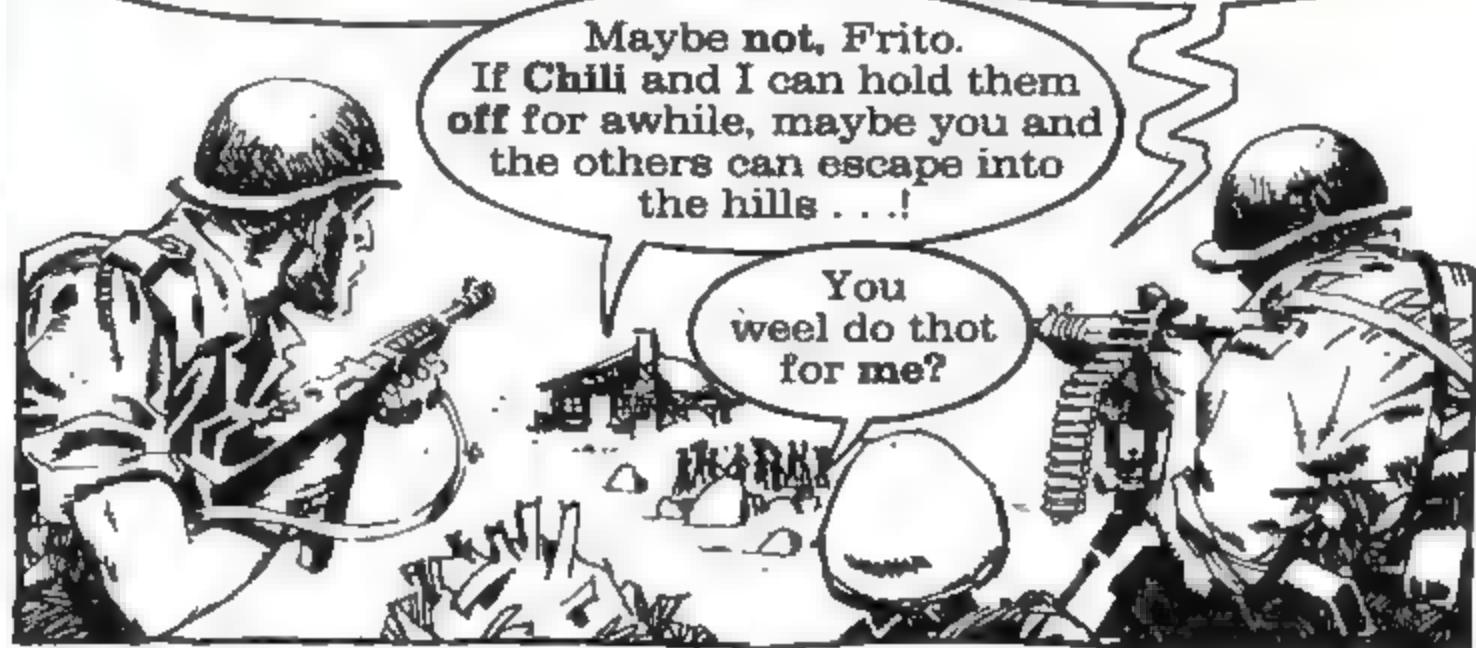


The lingering moments are pleasant, but pass all too swiftly when a rickety, toothless bandit storms through the encampment sounding a call to arms.



Aye toll you we should not half gohng-boinged thee governor's dohter!

Now look an' see! He ees mod! We weel all go to jaihl!



Needless to say, the battle is swiftly lost without firing a shot.



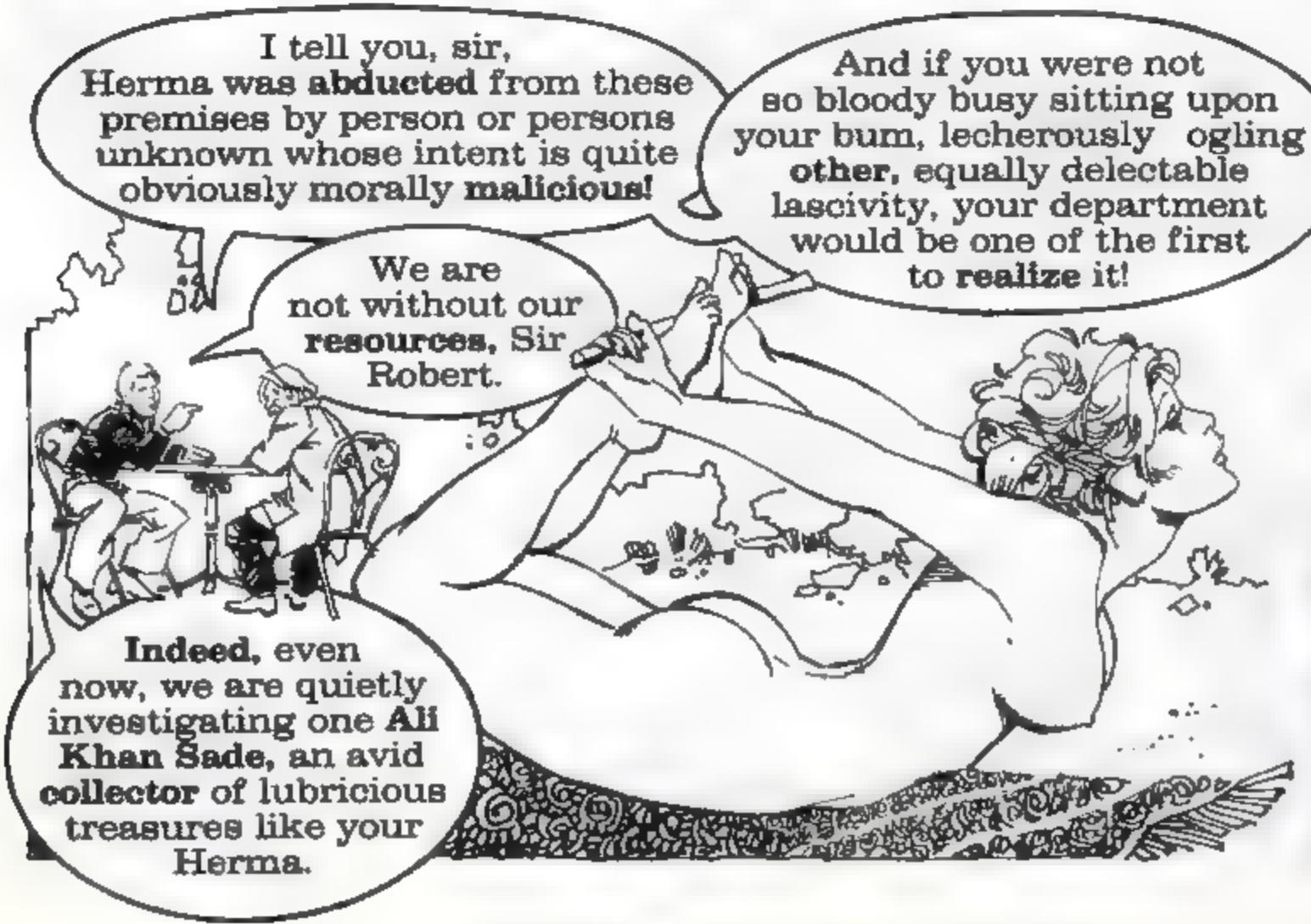
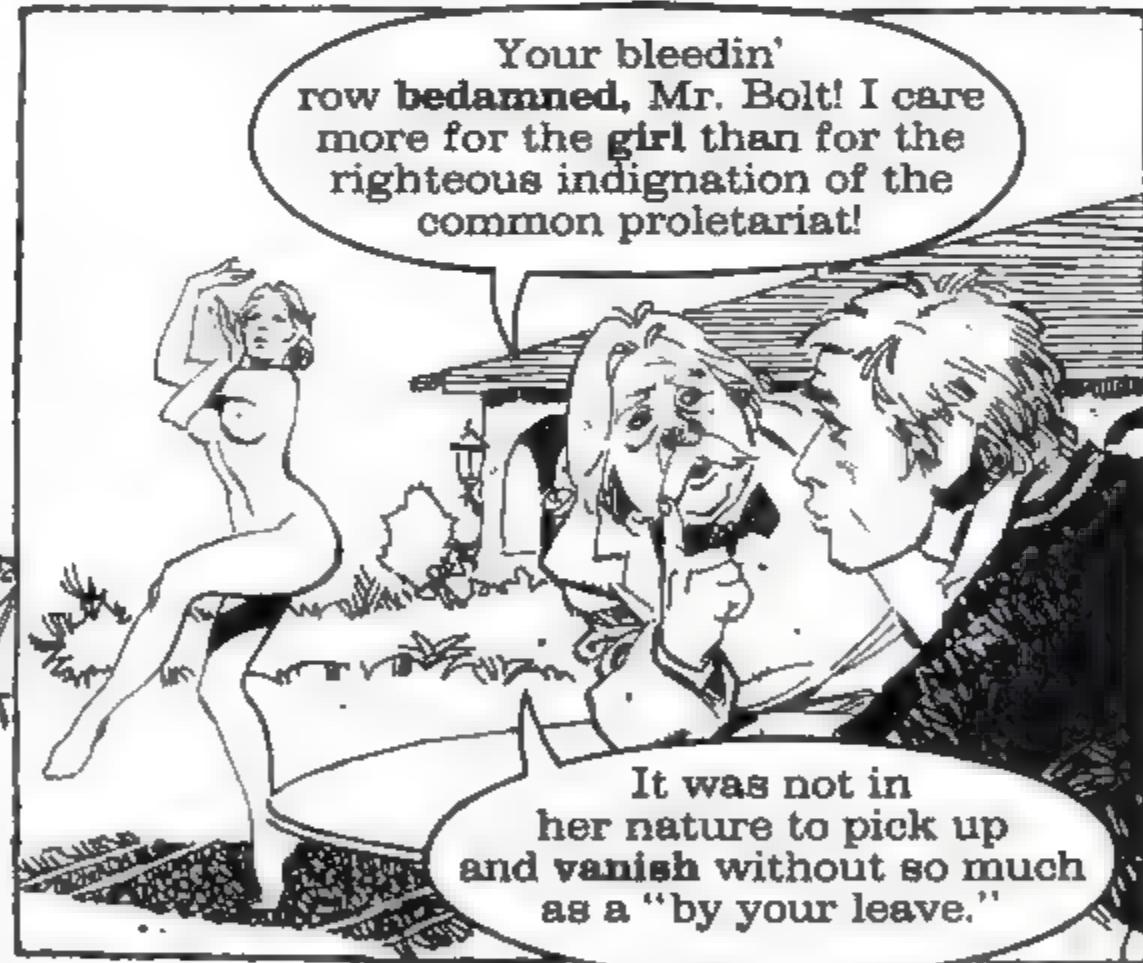
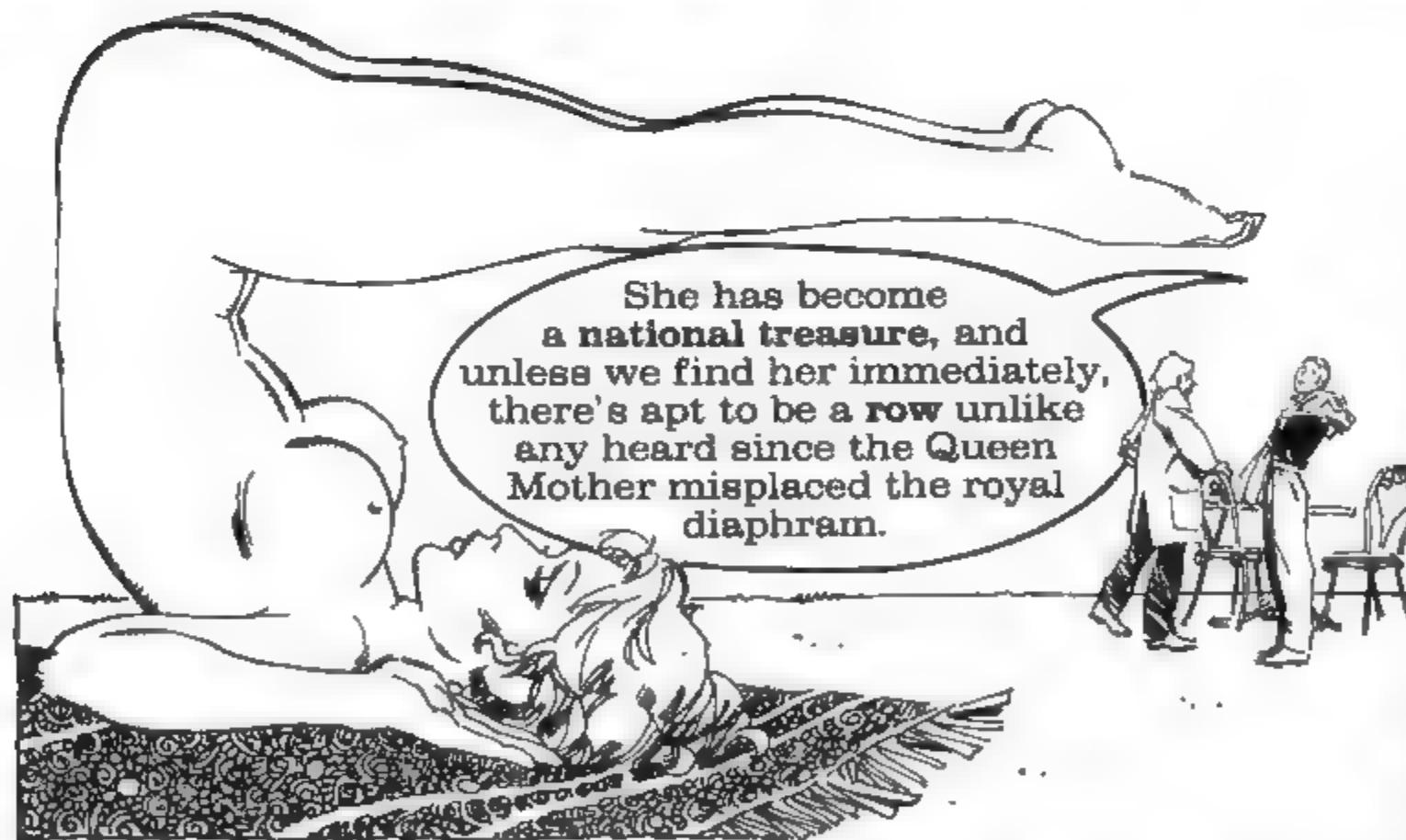
It is sometime later when Herma and Chili are delivered into the hands of their keeper, a veritable wall of a woman calling herself simply, Warden!



The guard departs, commending the girls into the hands of their brutish overseer.



Meanwhile, on her Majesty's Golden Isles, the eminent Professor Sir Robert Drafttree Battlesberry, head of the famous expedition which discovered the Viking Princess hibernating within a thousand-year-old block of ice, plays host to an eager young member of Her Majesty's Secret Service.



The cool night air is like springtime in the Mexican wilds, stirring a man's passions, turning his fancy towards lubriciously philandering pastimes.

What's the matter, hot lips? Don't you see anything to tickle your fancy tonight?

Madame, it has been veritable eons since you've augmented your estimable but ultimately familiar fare with a palatable tidbit worthy of a connoisseur of libidinous dispositions.

Got a yen for some fresh flesh, eh, lover boy?

For once you're in luck. I've received a new shipment only this afternoon. Two of the finest, (and, I might add, most expensive) pieces of merchandise old Mother Warden has ever had the pleasure of offering.

Caramba! They are angelic visions!

Screw the cost! I'll take both of them!

N-n-not so f-fast! W-w-whatever the asking p-p-price. I'll d-d-double it for the r-r-redhead!

As financial transactions are made, the girls are sent to their room to await their soon-to-be-coming clientele!

It is a pity that mine is such an obese boor. If nothing else it will be an experience!

Herma! You're not going to stand for this?

I have always believed that we were placed upon this world to enjoy ourselves, Chili. How can you not enjoy giving pleasure to another human being?

I've never done it with a lardpile before!

Giving pleasure is one thing. But letting the slimy slug hump my brains out isn't my idea of a fun time!

Then maybe you can find some use for this. A wise old woman... my mother... once told me that no self-respecting girl should ever be without one!

It... it's a bulb of garlic. I don't understand.

Not mere garlic. Norwegian skunk garlic. Simply chew on a clove for awhile and I guarantee your virtue will not be compromised for a month!

Gentlemen... have an enjoyable evening. And please, do try to leave as few whip scars and leather burns as possible!

Ohhhhhh, mah Chhhherie! Hhhhhhow my thighs cryhhhout for your puuhhsating, throbbing manhhhhood!

Gakk!

Come, my plumply empassioned paramour! Let us baste this sacred union with the oleaginous essence of your love!



Herma and her unctuous suitor repair to the plush seclusion of an adjoining room!

You seem awfully nervous, lover. Don't be. I'm as new to this as you seem to be. But I'll try to make it as painless as possible!

By the way... what's your name? I usually like to be on a first name basis with my lovers.

Well I'll be! A professional John! I didn't know there was such a thing.

N-N-N-No! I-I-I'm a talent s-scout f-f-f-for K-K-K-Krebbs International P-P-Pictures!

M-M-Mother runs the c-c-company! I just f-f-find the t-t-t-talent!

M-M-Mother used to r-r-run a house like this herself... y-y-y-years ago!

I-I-It's how she got s-started in the f-f-f-film industry!



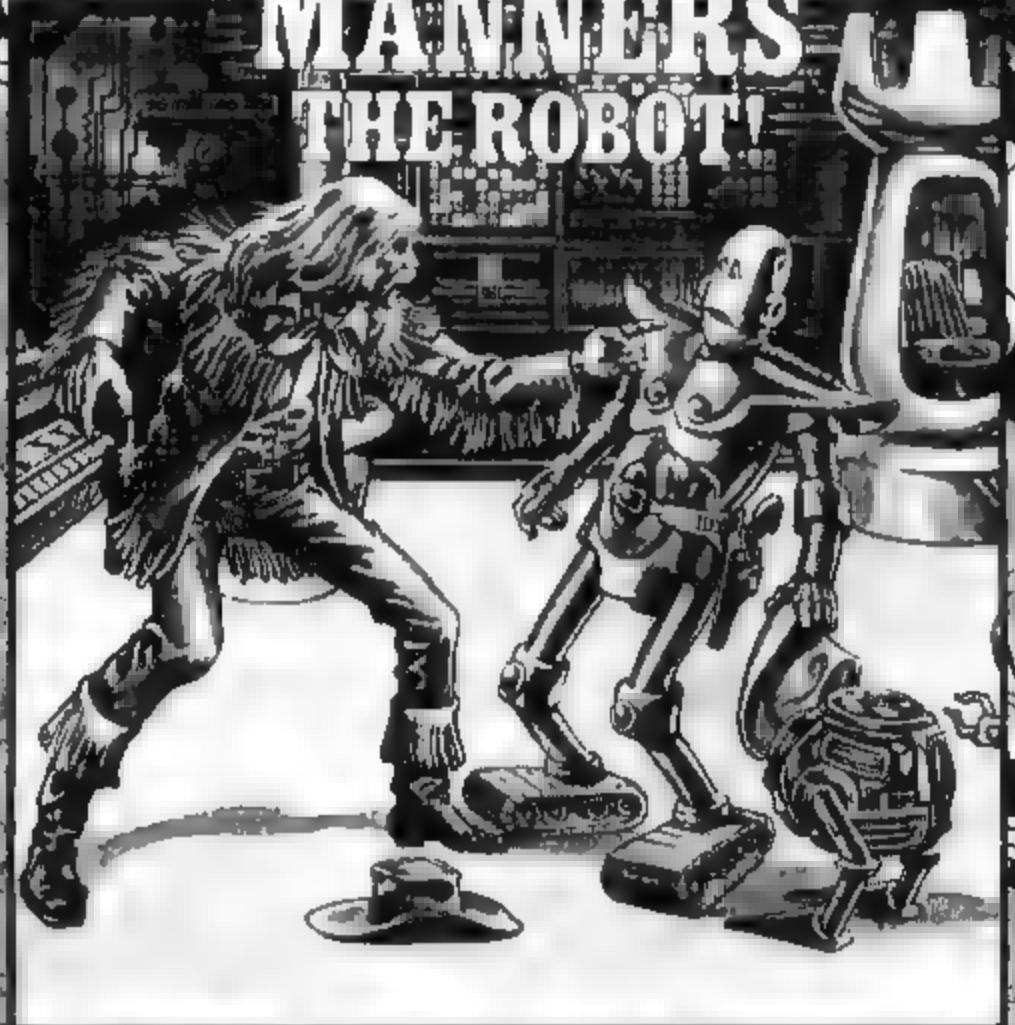
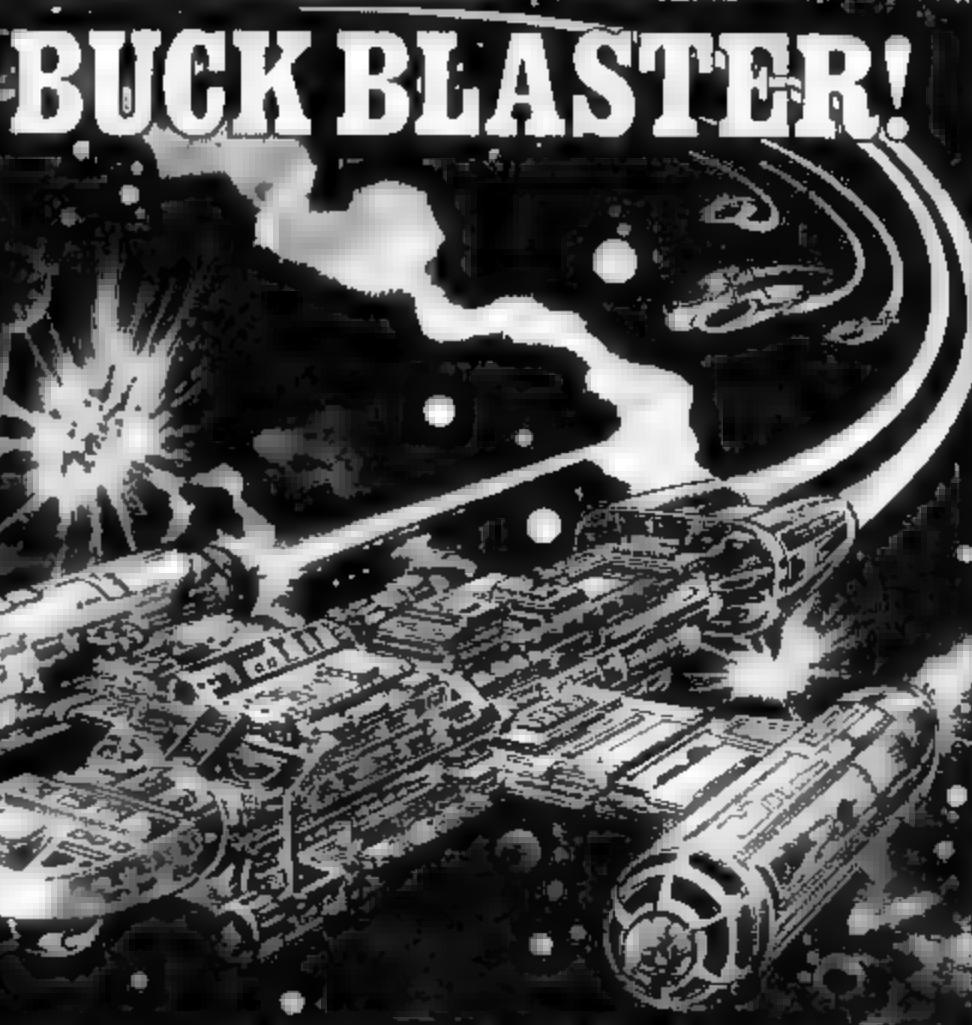
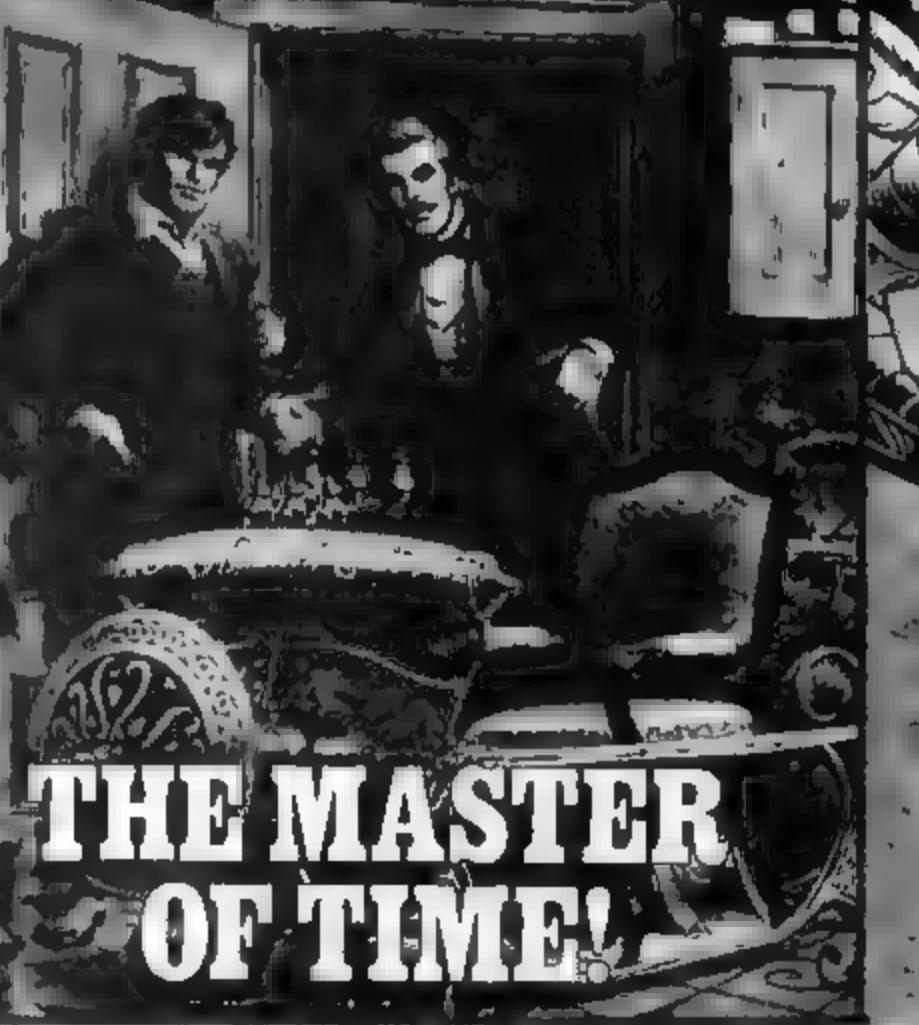
Herma continues in the next issue of 1984.

THE NEW WARREN AGE
OF EXCITEMENT HAS ARRIVED!

IN THE ALL-NEW ADVENTURE-PACKED
MAGAZINE!

The ROOK

FEATURING:

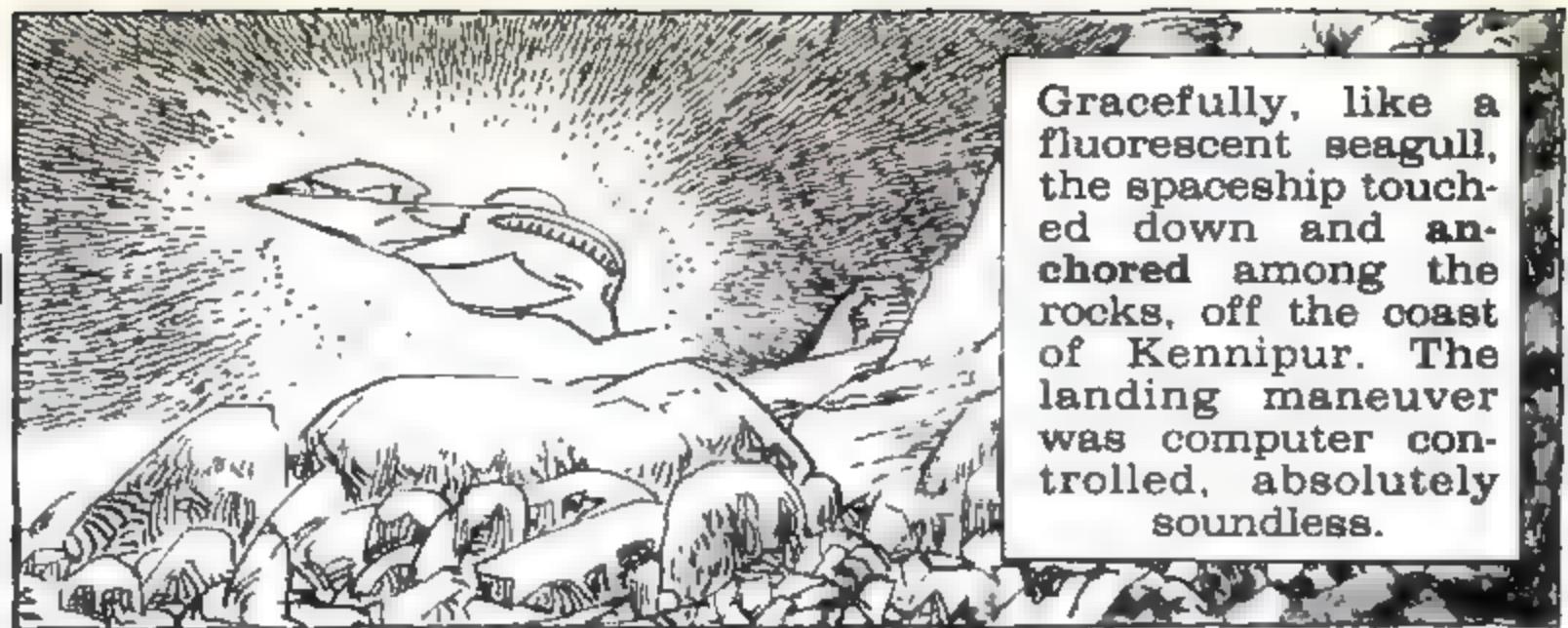


AT NEWS STANDS EVERYWHERE

..AUGUST 1st

A CLEAR and PRESENT DANGER!

The man who hatched was albino, the only passenger on the pre-programmed voyage, a semi-retired navigator. He staggered unsteadily as the cold, shallow surf washed against his ankles.



Gracefully, like a fluorescent seagull, the spaceship touched down and anchored among the rocks, off the coast of Kennipur. The landing maneuver was computer controlled, absolutely soundless.



As he walked the length of the beach, the water followed him, filling in and dissolving his footprints.



Beyond the beach were the gardens and orchards. While the Albino squirrelled through, crushing and squishing several exquisite plants, he maintained telepathic contact with the mothership computer.



Intelligence: Coastal vegetation plentiful, so plump it's erotic. The hues are particularly vivid and intense. It looks almost artificial.

Concurs with pre-recorded data.



Deeper in the garden, a synthetic scarecrow was securely rooted. Stimulated by solar energy stored during daylight hours, the mannequin broadcasted ultra-sonic vibrations that accelerated the dispersement of birds and small pack animals.

The navigator considered its clothing. While not the finest, it was less conspicuous than what he was wearing.



Carefully, he lifted the pen-lite maser from his own garments. He hoped he wouldn't need it.

He'd come here to prevent a life, not take one. Though he wasn't sure there was a difference.



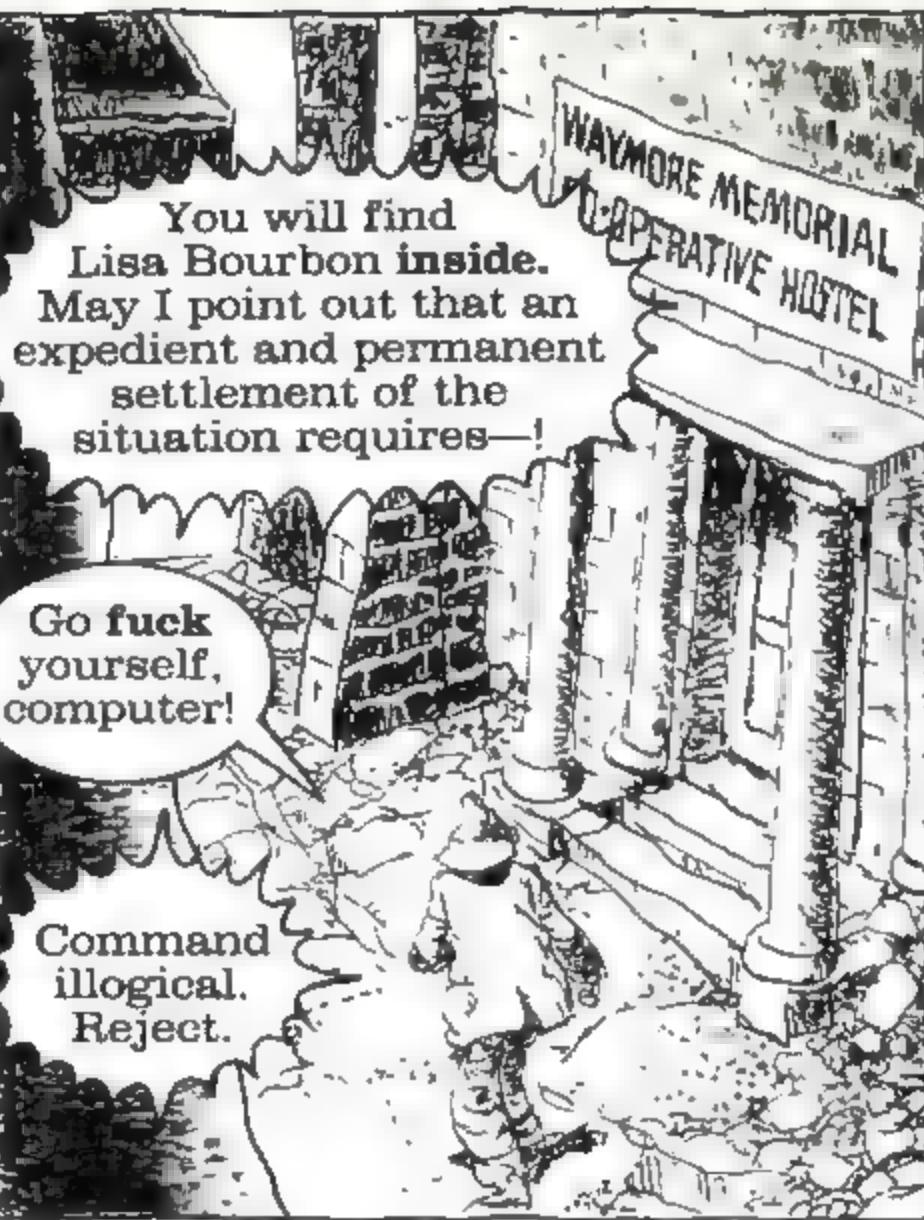
Question:
how far to the
Acropolis?

You'll be
there before
daybreak. I'll
direct you.

The Acropolis was a federally funded housing project for the migrant workers, mostly refugees and expatriates, who tended the agricultural reserve, the gardens and hot-houses beyond the dome.



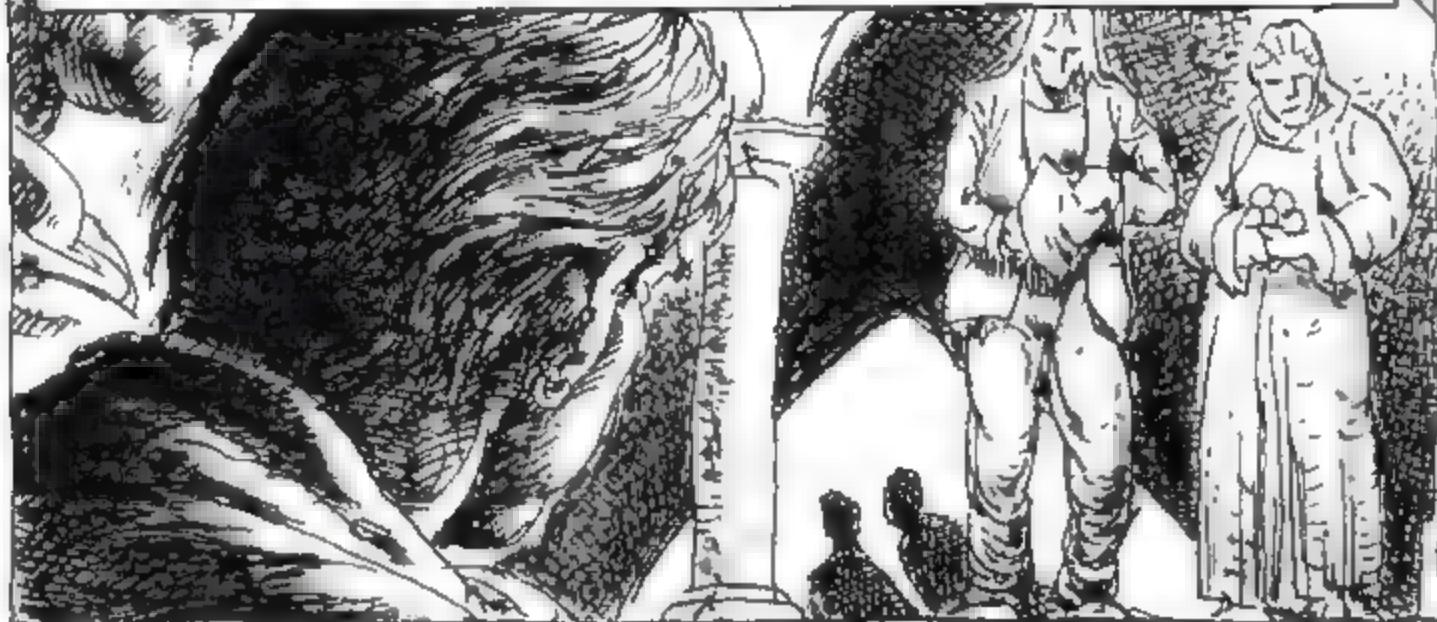
He arrived as the mothership computer predicted, as dawn's first light peeped tentatively through the clouds.



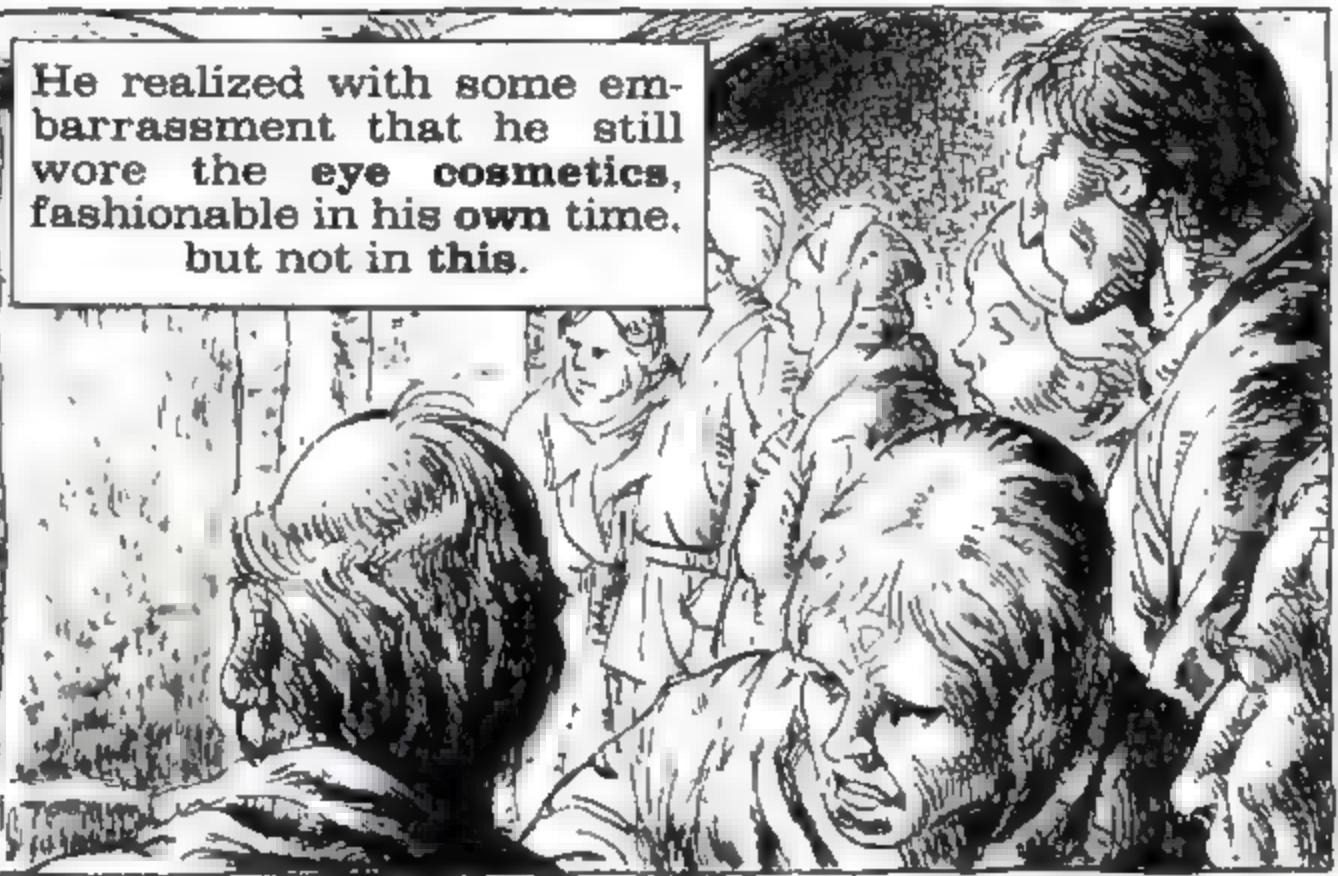
He knocked. Not immediately, but soon enough, he heard stirrings within; people waking, stretching, listening for a repetition of whatever real or imaginary sound which had disturbed them.



In the dormitory, he was introduced as Luke Cross. Some of the residents stared, as if he were a new, highly questionable form of wildlife. Others seemed on the verge of laughter. A few came forward to welcome him.



He realized with some embarrassment that he still wore the eye cosmetics, fashionable in his own time, but not in this.



Hi. I'm Lisa.

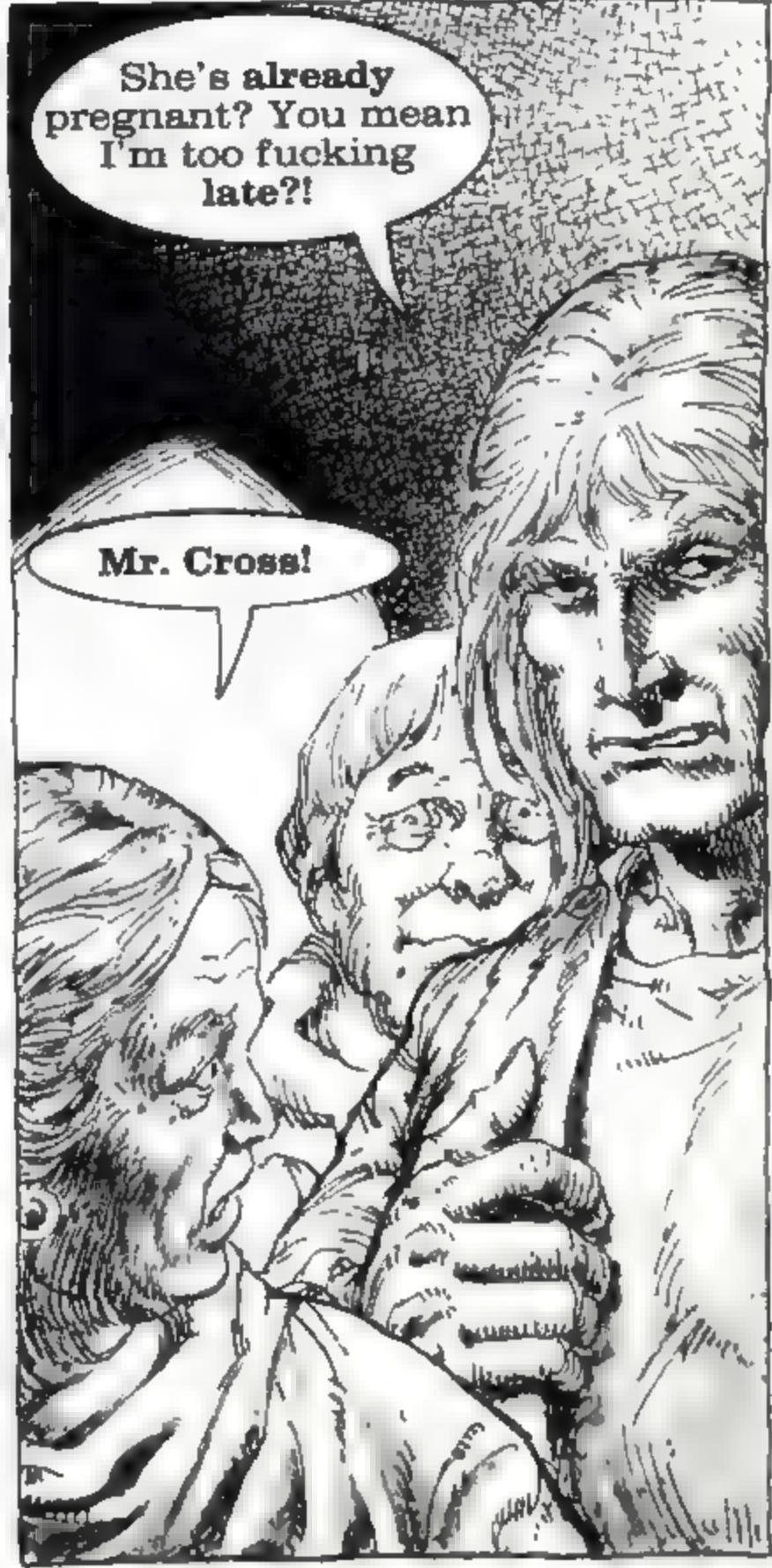
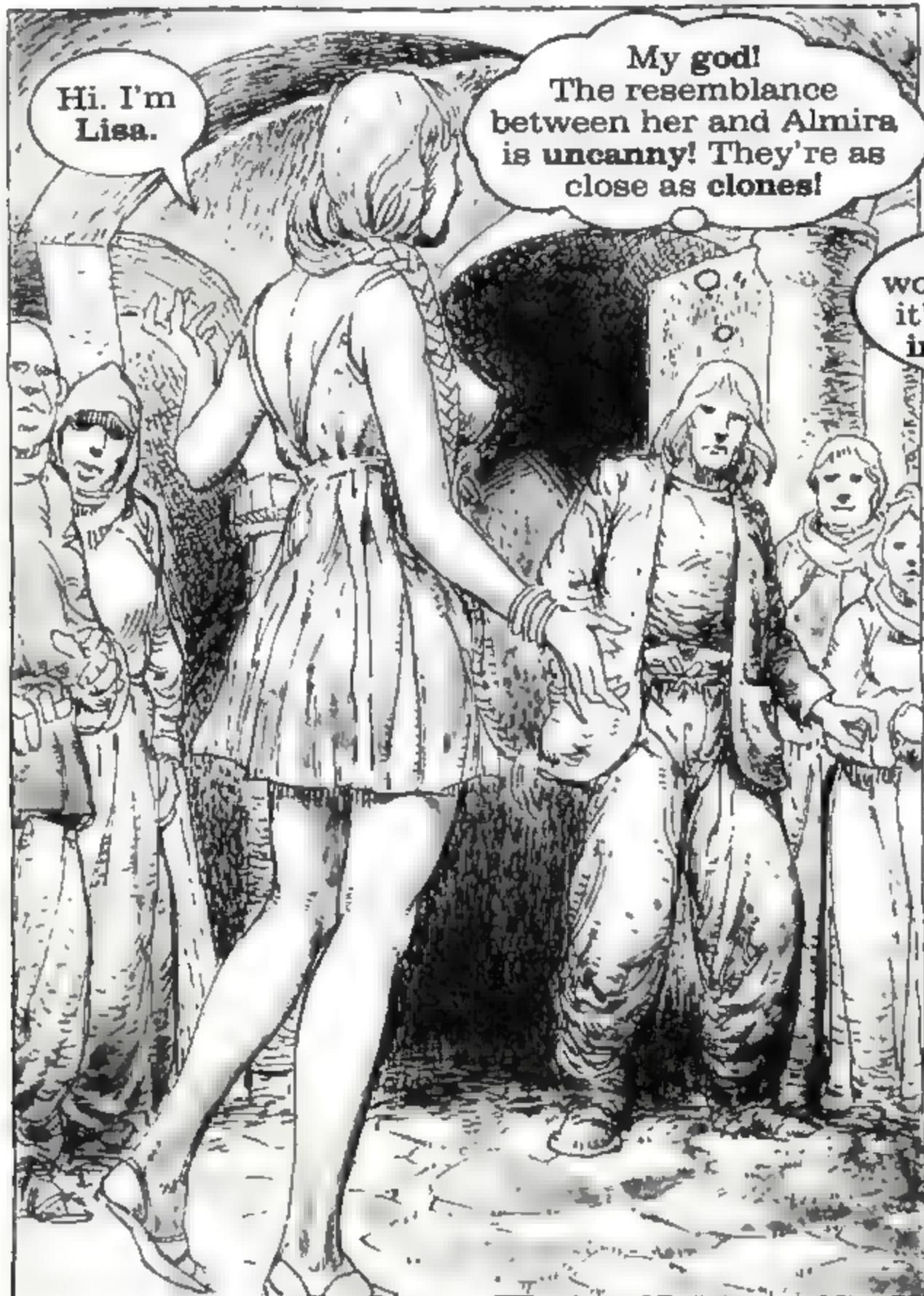
My god! The resemblance between her and Almira is uncanny! They're as close as clones!

Nothing to worry about... it's just morning sickness!

Suddenly, the girl clamped her hand over her mouth. The navigator watched in confused horror as the girl retched and gagged.

She's already pregnant? You mean I'm too fucking late?!

Mr. Cross!



Later in the morning, he and Lisa went walking. Mentally, Luke had striven to maintain a pragmatic, hard-lined attitude, but this was fast faltering.

His thoughts fled back to the events which had brought him here. He'd returned home after a long voyage, hungering for Almira's warm, delicious body. Instead found her cold and lifeless.

I'll see that son of a bitch in hell!

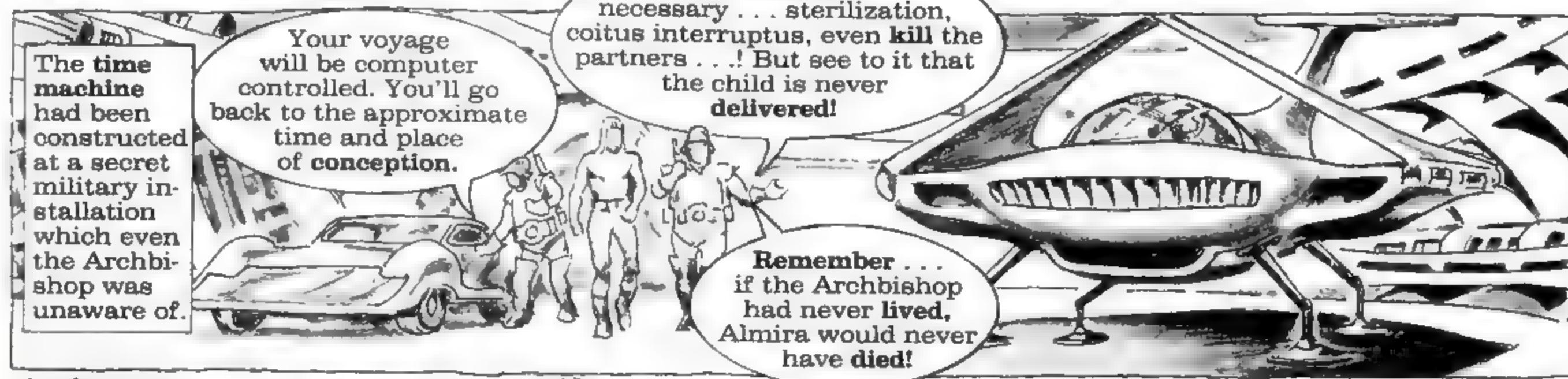
We have a better idea, one that will rid us all of the Archbishop . . . and restore your beloved wife. All you have to do is change history!



He was told that her death had been decreed by the Archbishop, who presided over the unified church-state. Almira had been labelled . . . a sinner!

Luke neither liked nor trusted the military, but he'd no choice other than to hear them out. They were trusted advisors, confidants of the Archbishop. They were the judges who'd established him as a political marionette . . .

. . . and now that he'd usurped their power, they wanted him out. Permanently! Not only dead, but never even born!



The time machine had been constructed at a secret military installation which even the Archbishop was unaware of.

Your voyage will be computer controlled. You'll go back to the approximate time and place of conception.

Do whatever's necessary . . . sterilization, coitus interruptus, even kill the partners . . . ! But see to it that the child is never delivered!

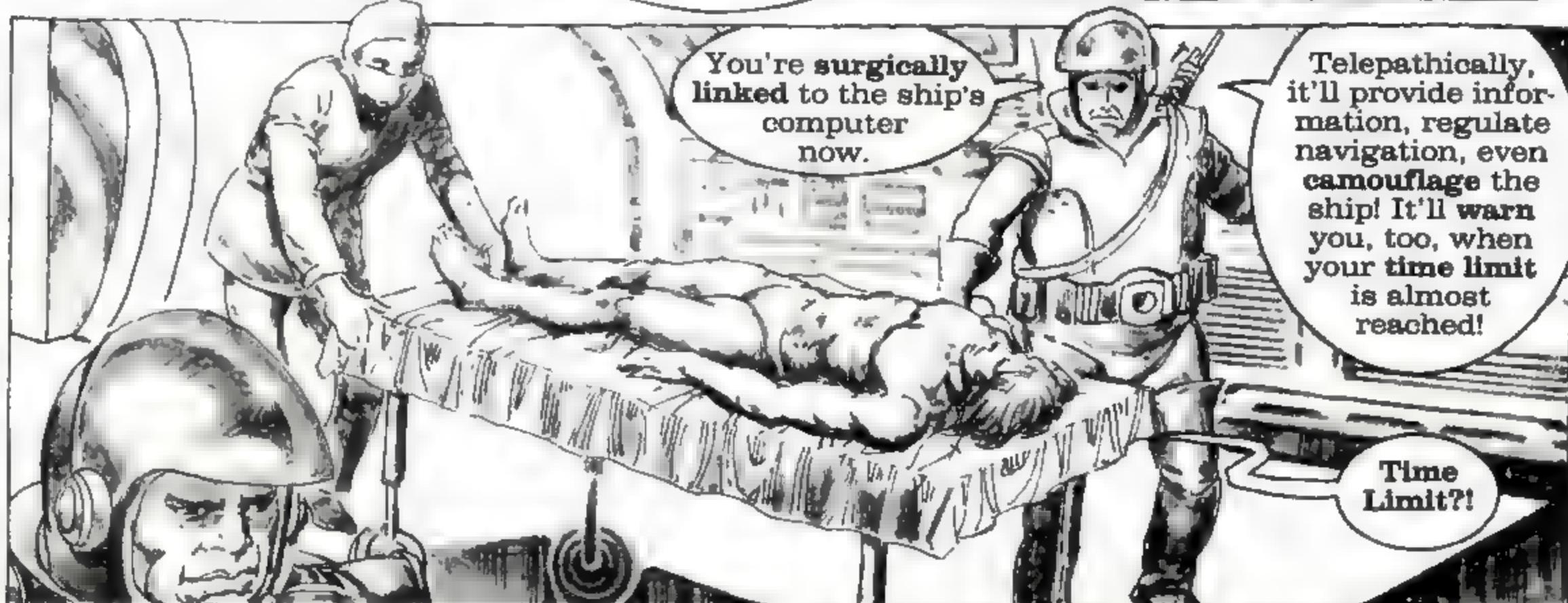
Remember . . . if the Archbishop had never lived, Almira would never have died!

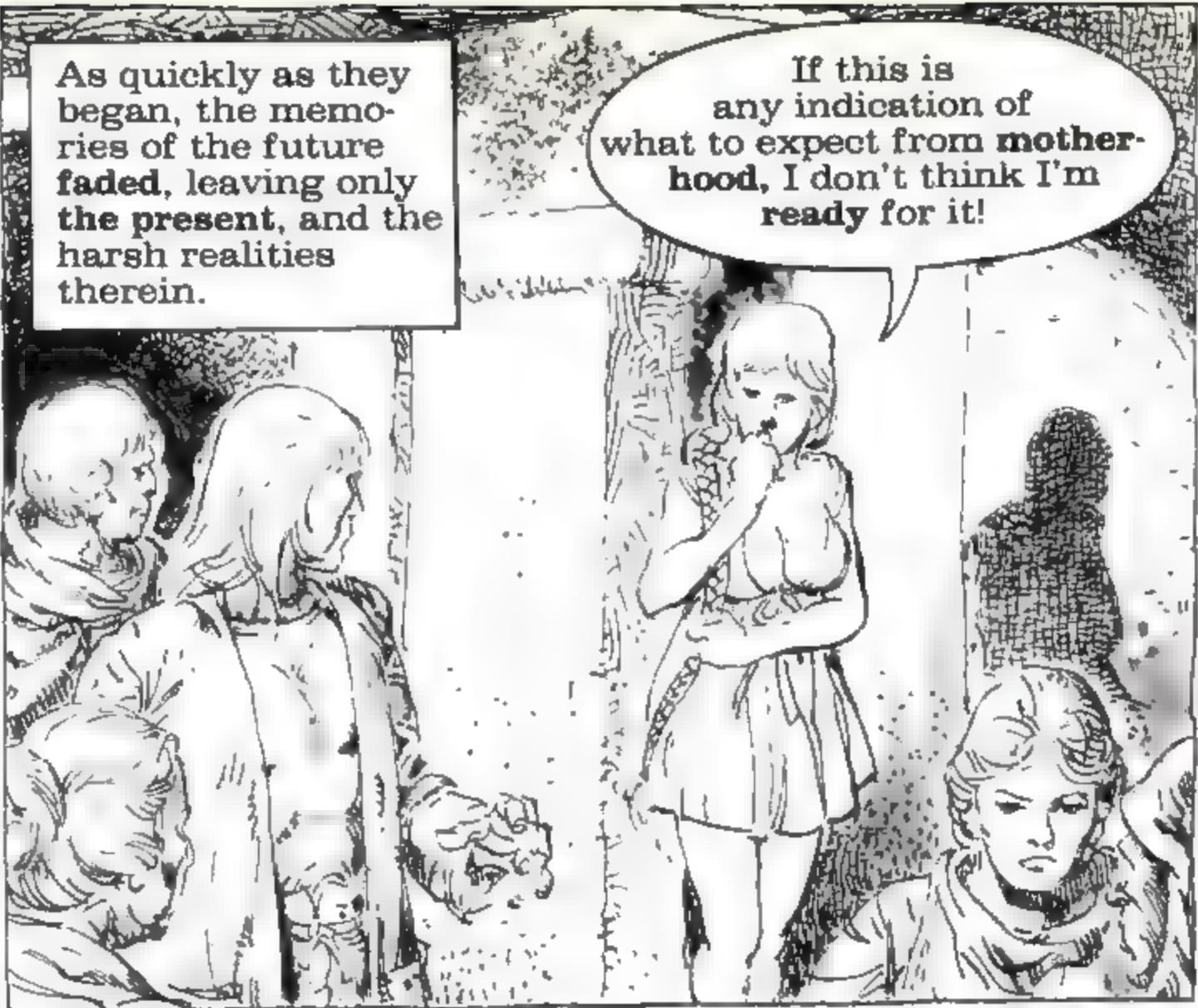
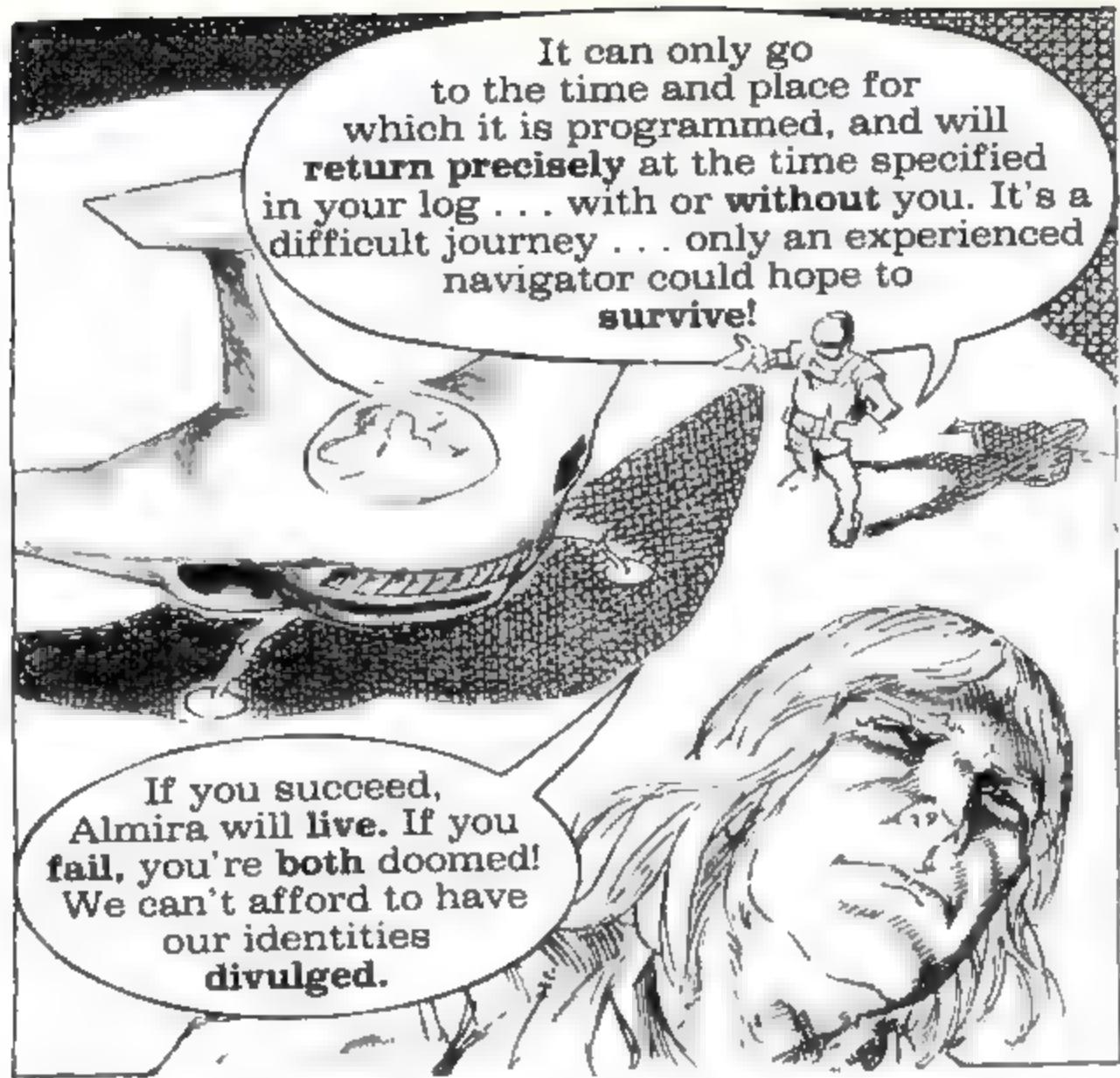
As they prepared the navigator for his voyage, he began to have thoughts of his own. Perhaps the Archbishop hadn't decreed Almira's death after all. Maybe these lying cocksuckers had pumped her just to ensure his cooperation. It didn't really matter, he knew. They had the only means to bring her back!

You're surgically linked to the ship's computer now.

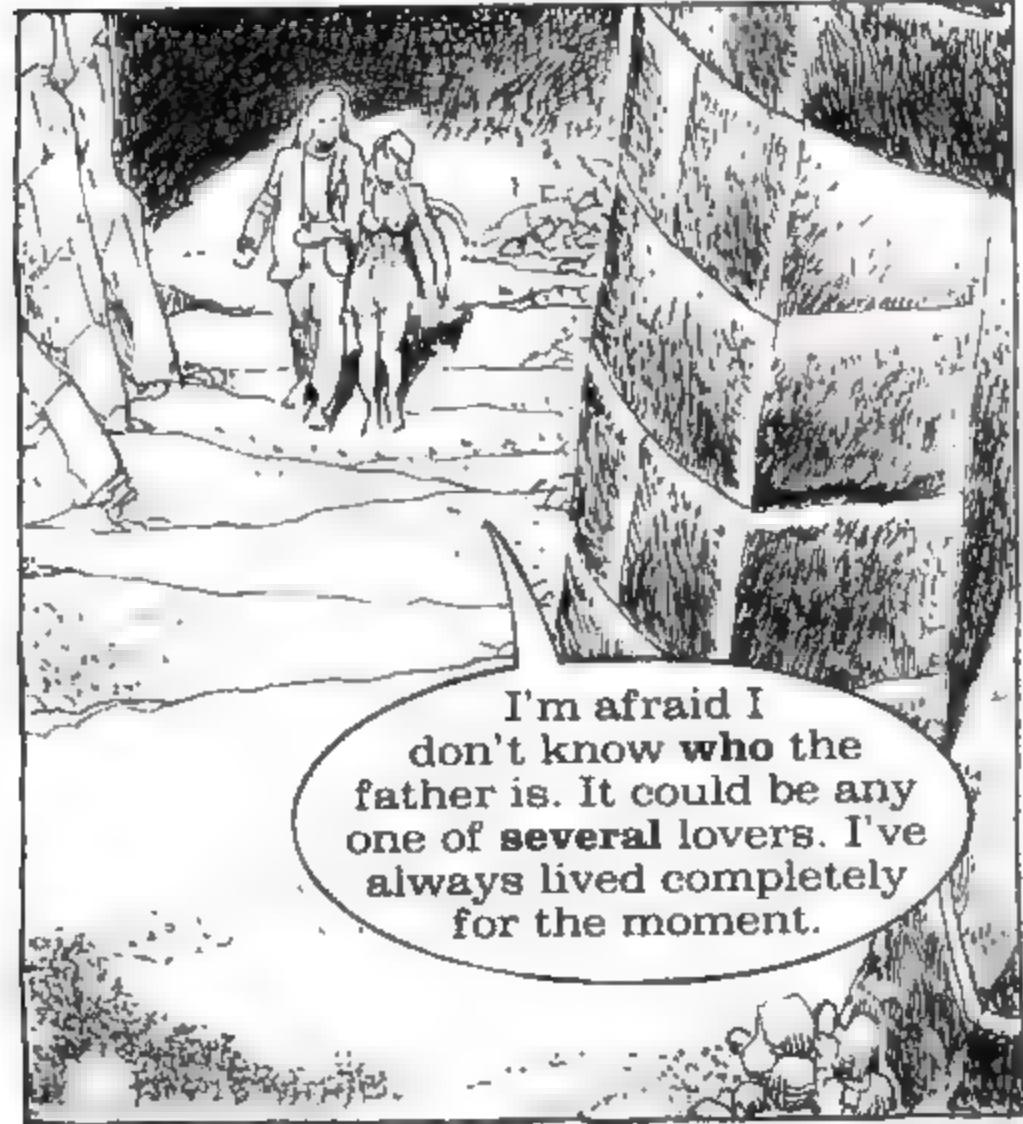
Telepathically, it'll provide information, regulate navigation, even camouflage the ship! It'll warn you, too, when your time limit is almost reached!

Time Limit?!

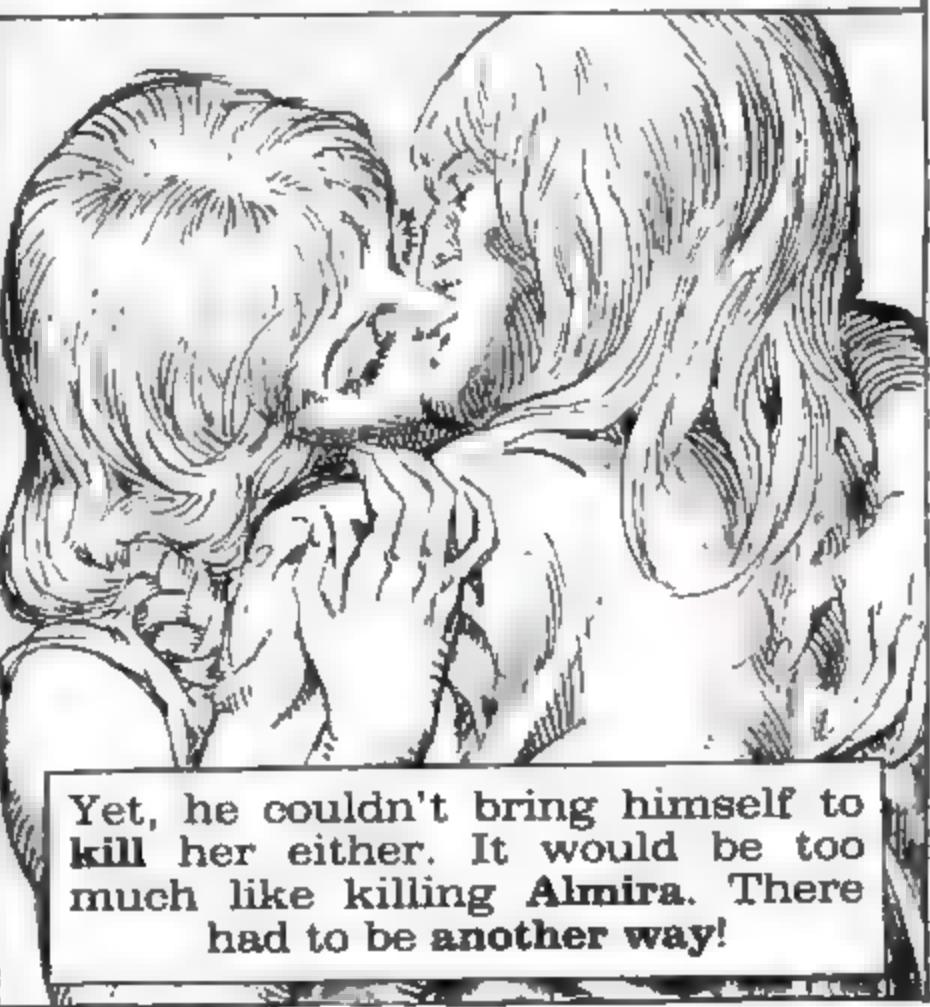




Luke wasn't concerned over the woman's misinterpretation of his words. His thoughts were fifty years in the future which was also, ironically . . . his past.

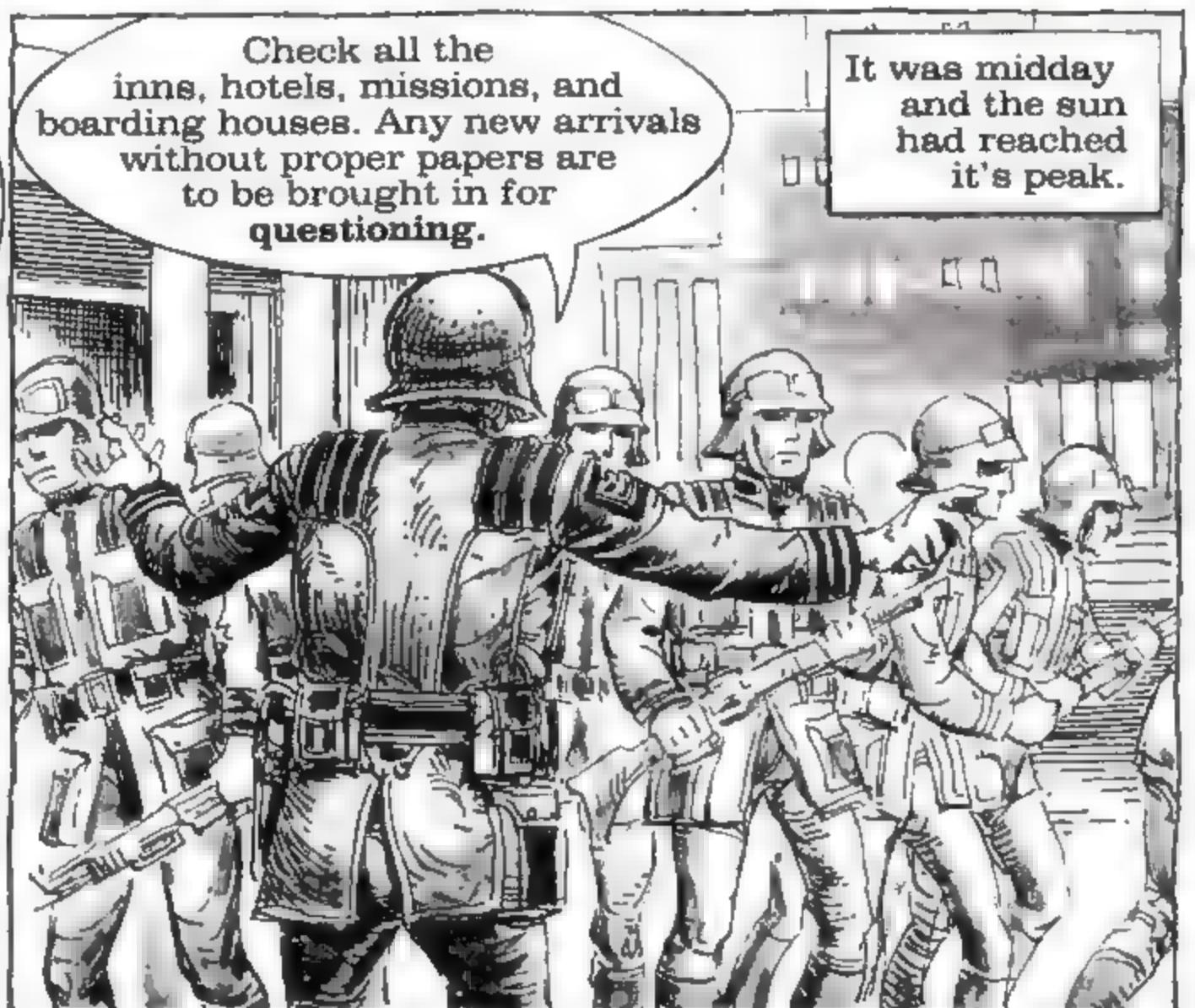
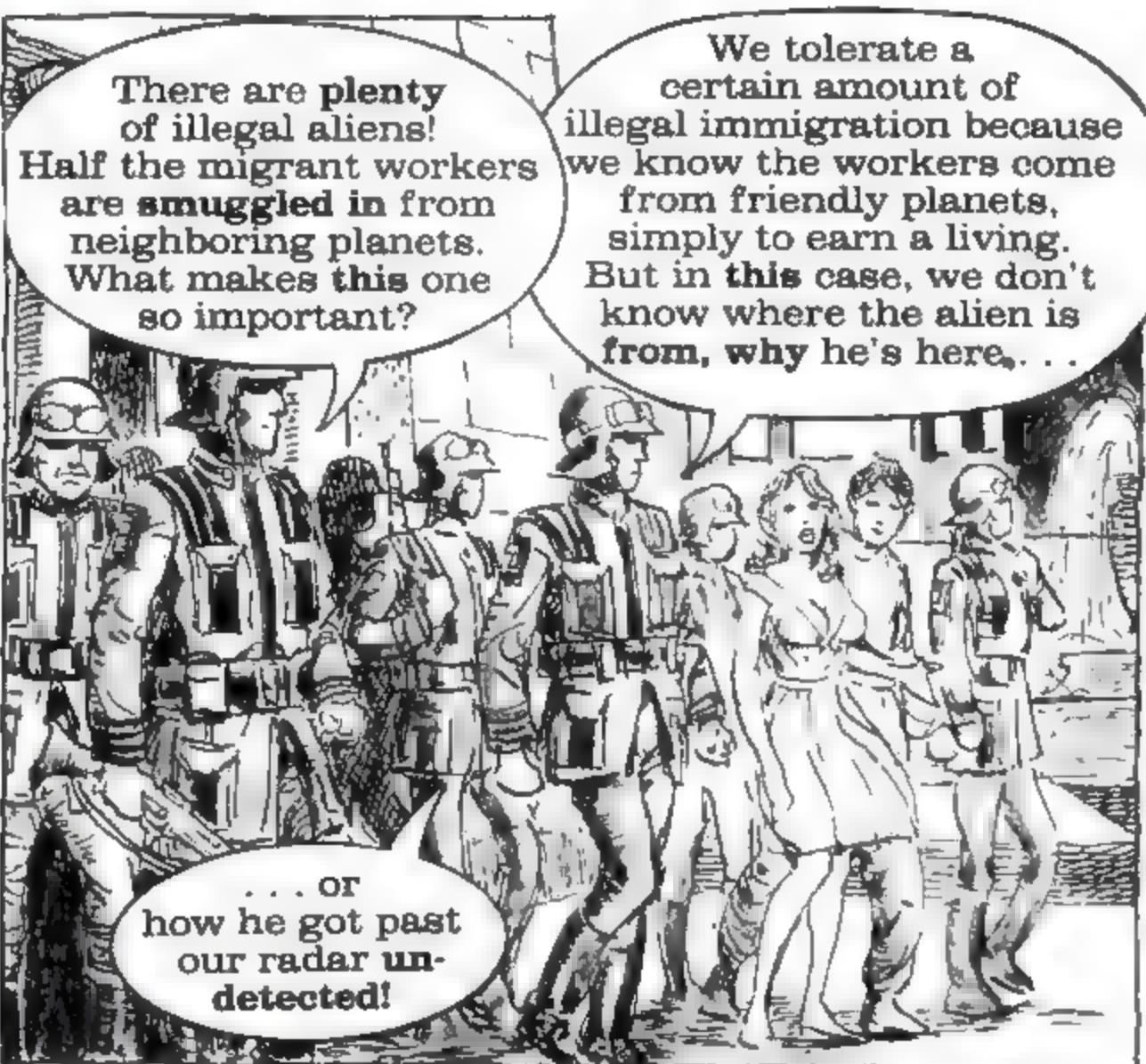
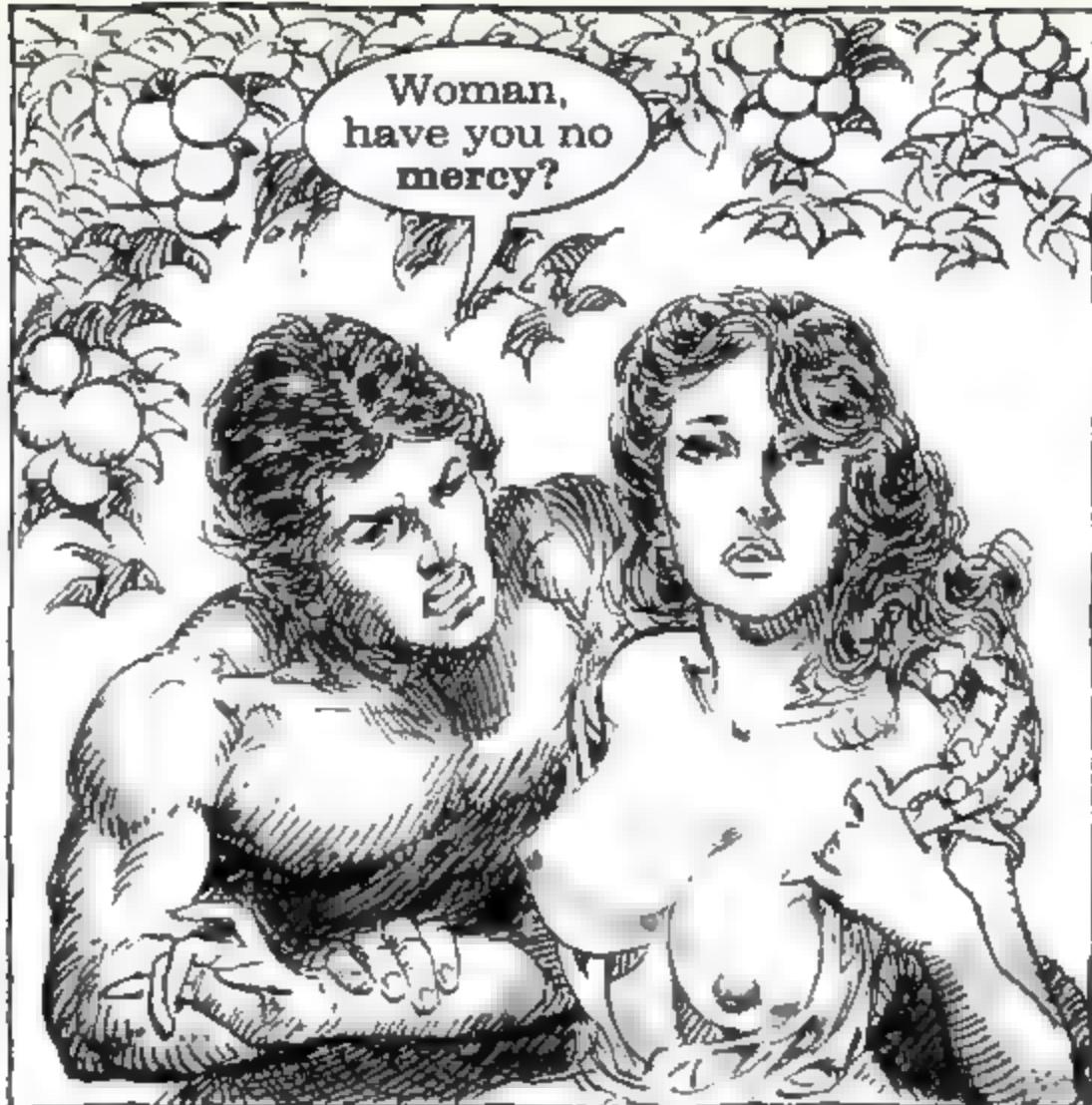


For a moment, Luke considered forgetting the mission and staying with Lisa. But although she was young, beautiful, and candid, and looked so very much like Almira, she couldn't take the place of an experienced and very deeply loved wife!



Meanwhile . . . in the gardens outside the Acropolis, another young man was smiling the smile of a raving lecher. Finally, after a long month of courtship, he was about to get into his girlfriend's pants.





Luke had already made up his mind. Somehow, somehow, he would arrange a **miscarriage** for the girl. The Archbishop would be lost, but Lisa and Almira would both survive. It was just a question of the right time, the proper **method** . . . !

First warning!
Return departure scheduled
for 30 chronas.

He frowned. That was roughly six hours from now, and he still had a long way back to the ship.

Meanwhile . . .

Yes, a man named Luke Cross arrived only this morning. I didn't ask for his papers. Right now I believe he's out at the cove with Lisa.

I'd better have a talk with him. The Director always gets a little nervous when our security systems are breached.

At first, when the security officer found Luke's clothing, he felt **silly**.

With my luck,
I'll catch them fucking
on the beach and we'll
all be embarrassed.

When he found the strange, kaleidoscopic spectacles tucked into an inner pocket, his attitude changed.

Well, what do you know!

The time-sailor was a man who recognized opportunity when he saw it. Lisa was enchanted by the sea, oblivious to the rest of her surroundings.

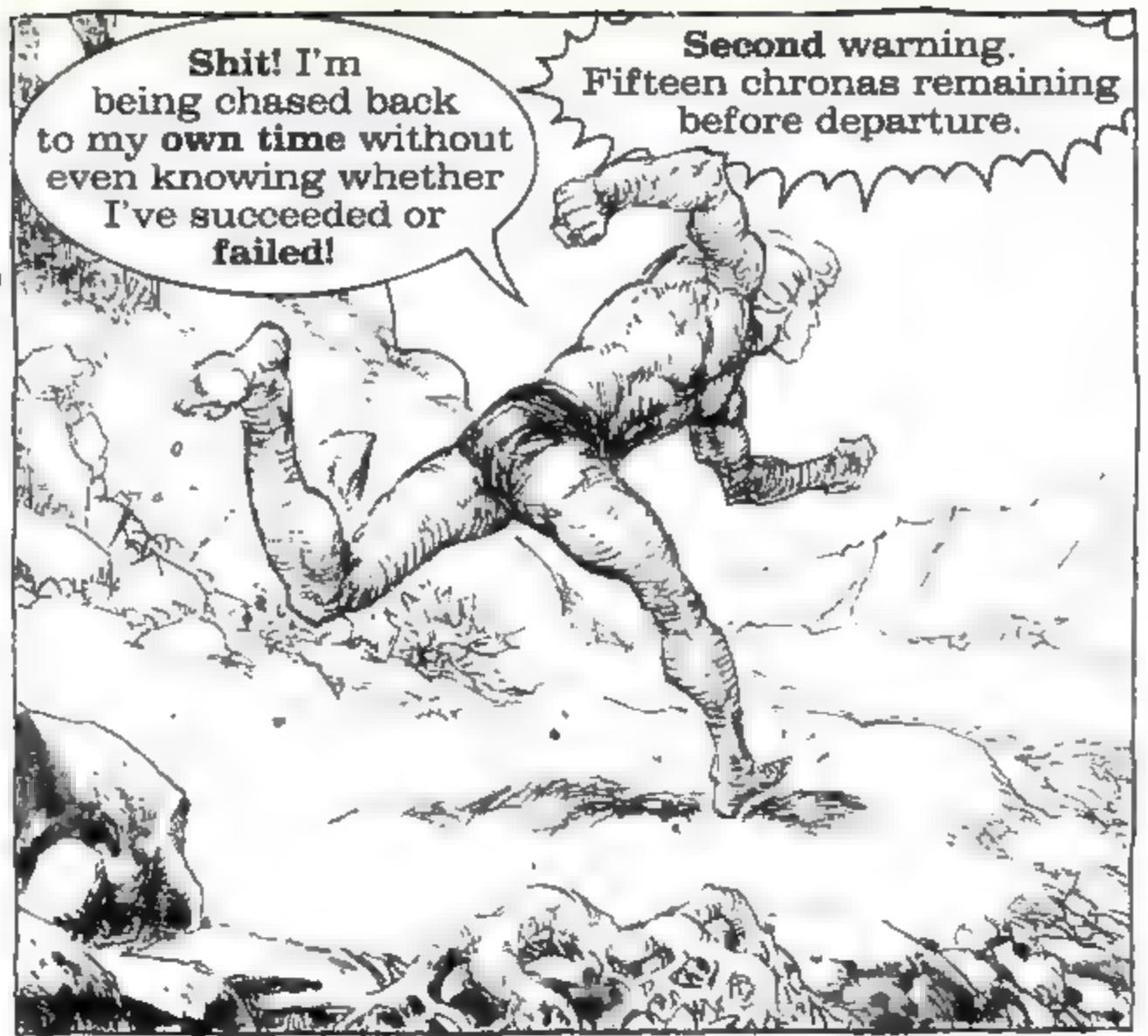
The drop was perhaps six feet — certainly not enough to kill her. But as for the baby — well, the world didn't really need another religious zealot anyway!

Then it all came together.

Luke . . .
what . . . what
are you
doing . . . ?

Nooooo!





The fugitive's description was instantaneously flashed to all Federal Security personnel. The manhunt began in earnest. They used aircraft, animals, ground-troops, electronic tracking devices... all the technology and manpower at their command.

Hours later, they still hadn't caught him.



Even with his course mapped out by the computer, it was a quarter of a day's walk to the shore where the time ship was moored. Hiding, dodging search parties, airborne shuttlecraft, and what not, it could take forever!

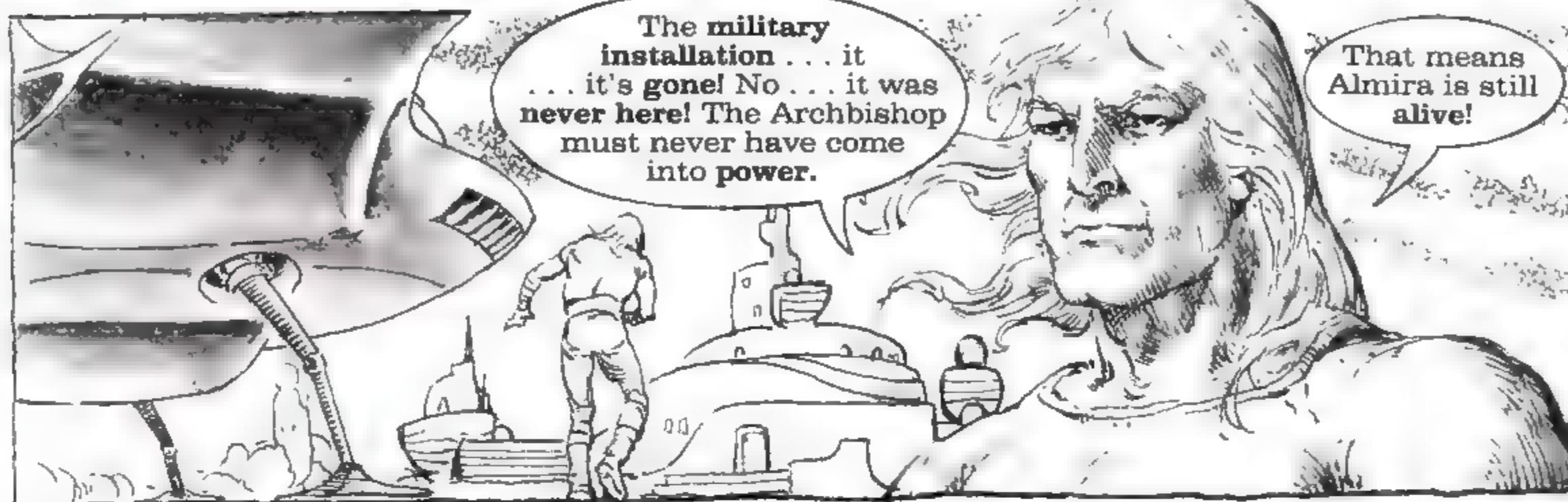
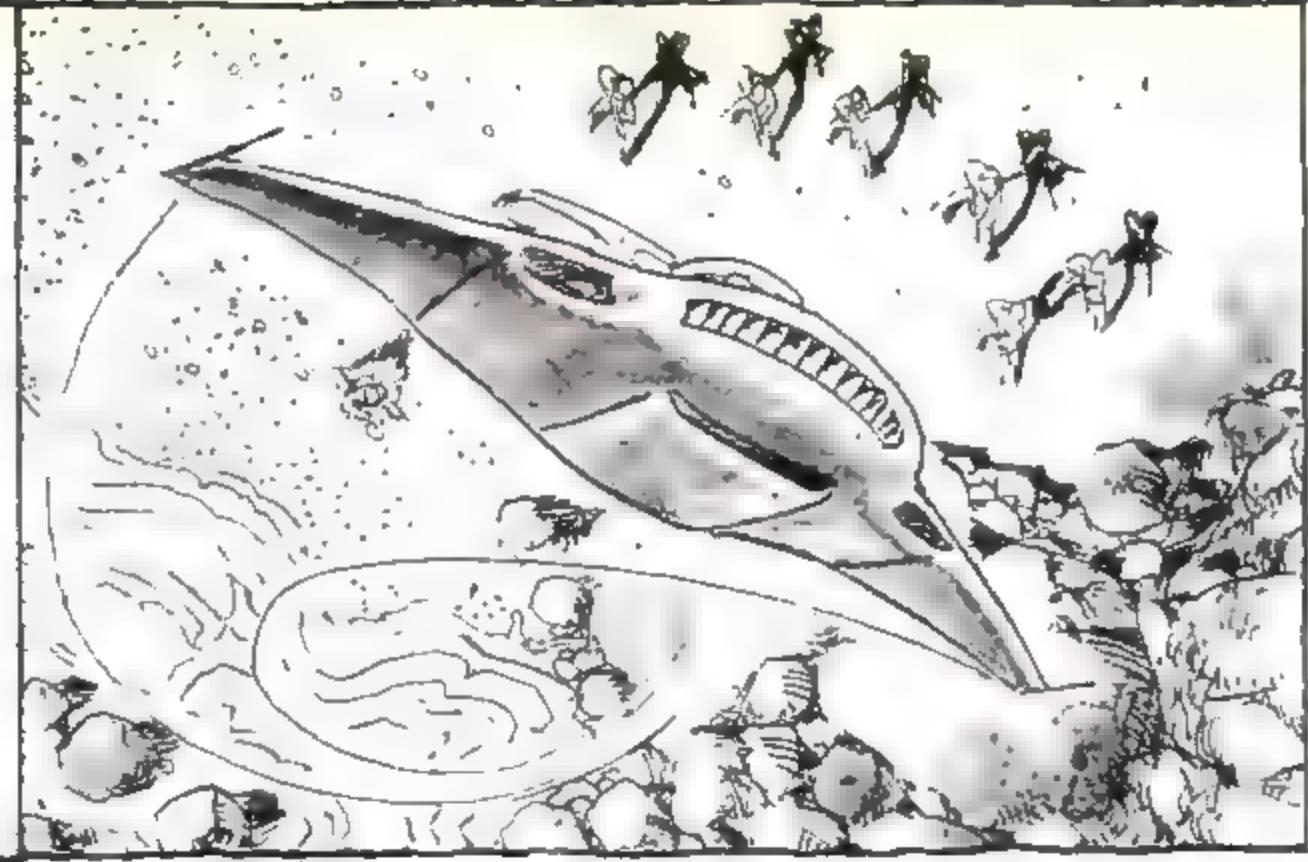
Third Alert:
Eight chronas remaining.
Suggest all possible haste.

I'm comin'... I'm comin'!





The timeship swiftly cast off . . . right on schedule . . . piloted by a navigator who may or may not have changed history and resurrected the dead. Had he succeeded? He wouldn't know until he'd arrived safely back in his own time!



Luke could see no way in which the Archbishop could have influenced the purchase of his home. He felt reasonably certain that the house stood where it always had. He ran towards it, his heart pounding.

There was, however, one serious and unforeseen alteration. What it came down to is this: years ago, the Archbishop had purchased several thousand ketros of land—in the name of the church, of course—evacuating the families who lived there.

It was as a result of that minor exodus that Almira had met her future husband.

Here, in the world he'd made, they'd never met at all! Instead Luke had married a longtime friend who he had never really loved, during his autumn years when he couldn't afford to be all that selective.

He wondered about Almira, about the kind of life she was living. He wondered about the military men, too. Had they gotten the power they craved? Were there others without wives or jobs because of what he'd done? And how exactly did all these changes occur?



What about the time machine and the computer? How is it they still existed when in this world they'd never even been created? Could they be used again? Questions swam through Luke's head like darting schools of fish. Most of them went without answers.



The first time I laid eyes on Steamer Starfire, he was knee-high to a Vesuvian Parblob and full of the same piss and vinegar which so characterized his old man.

There's Squad Leader Becker's signal, Colonel. The fighters are ready for simulated combat.

Sam Starfire and I passed through the Peacemakers Academy together in '97. Back in the peaceable times . . . before they opened the galactic frontier.

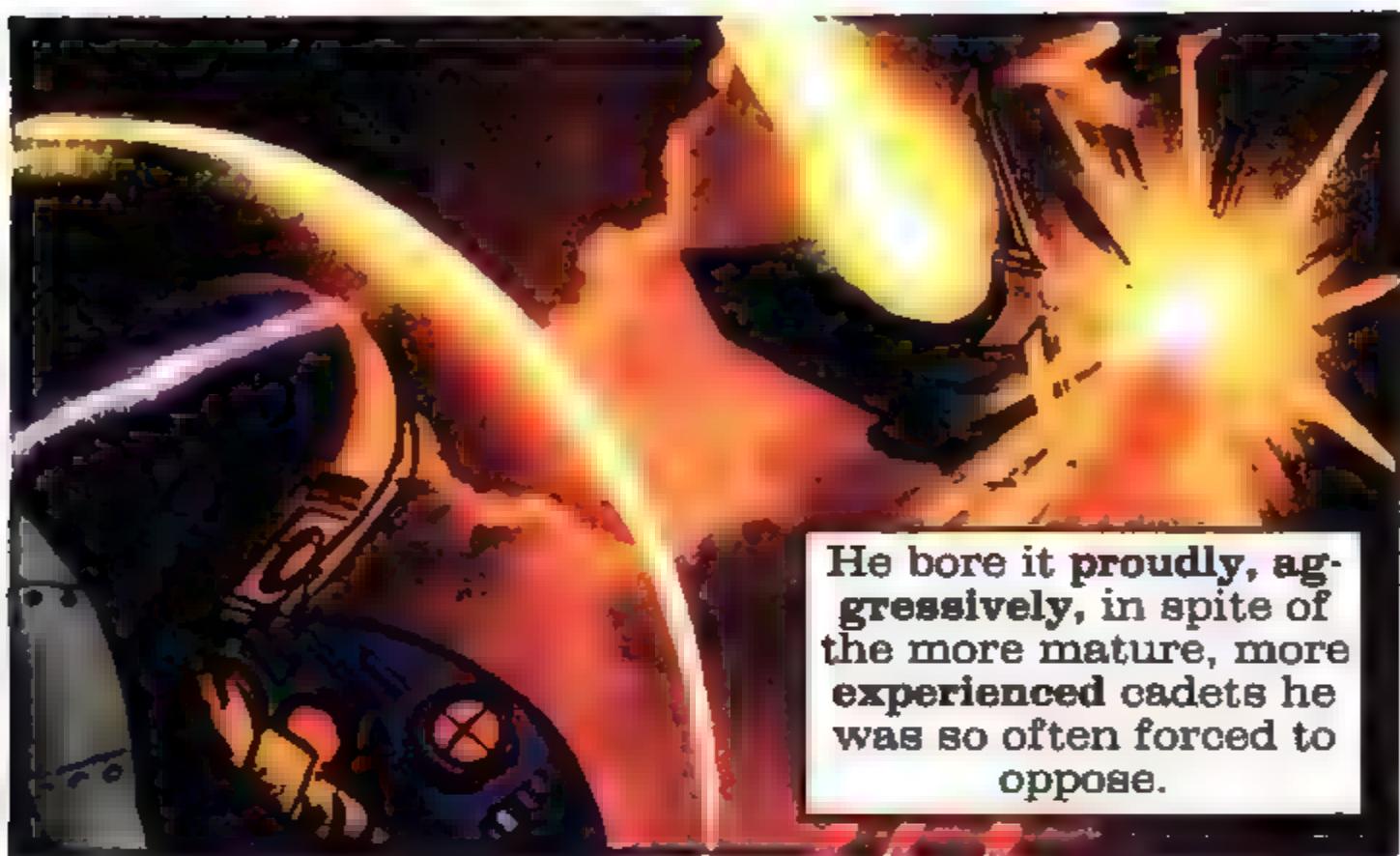
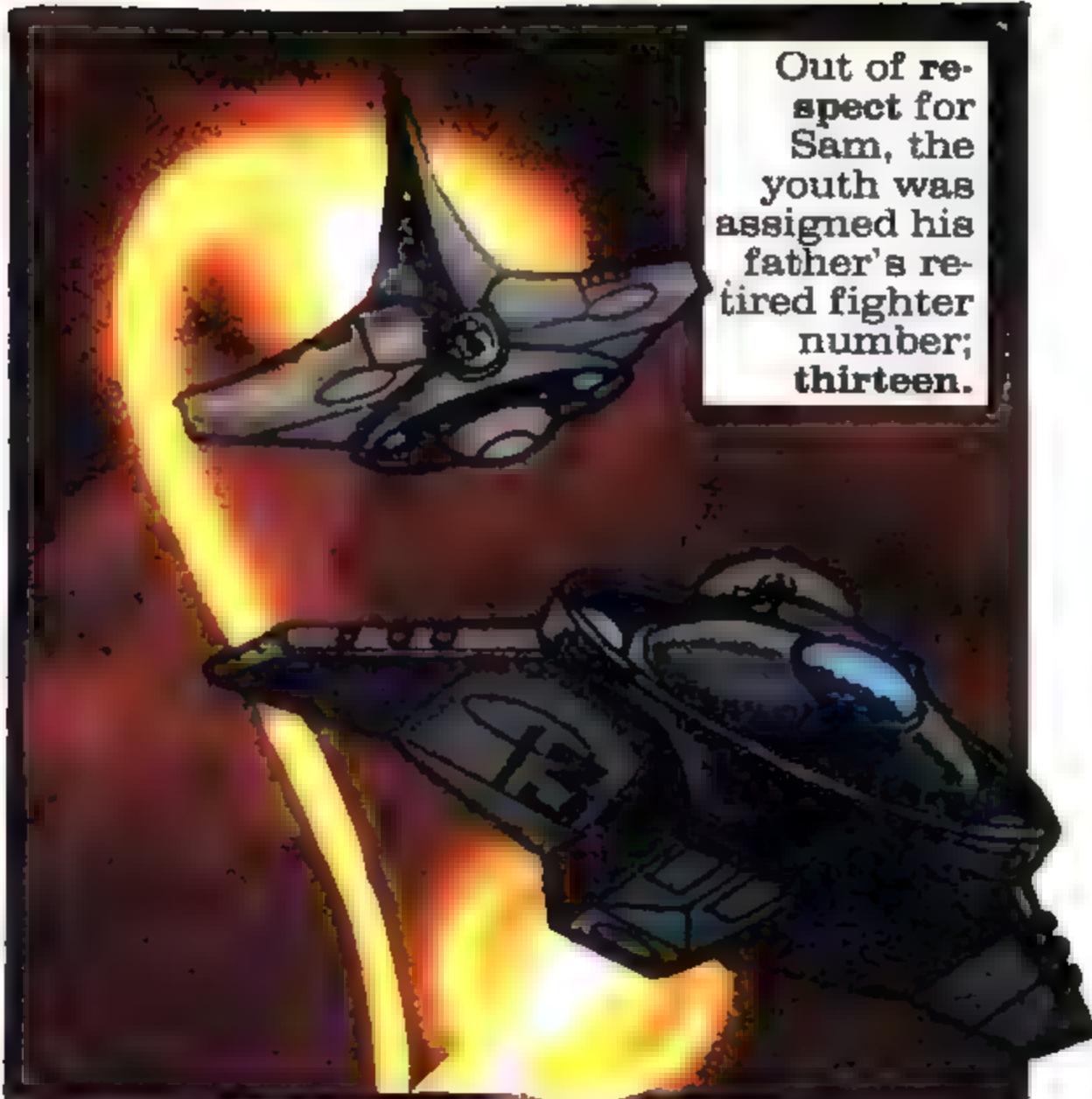
Everyone expected Sam's son Kris to follow in his dad's footsteps; to join his father in the outworlds and become one of the hottest Peacemakers in the service. Hence the nickname Steamer: Hot on the old man's tail!

Starfire

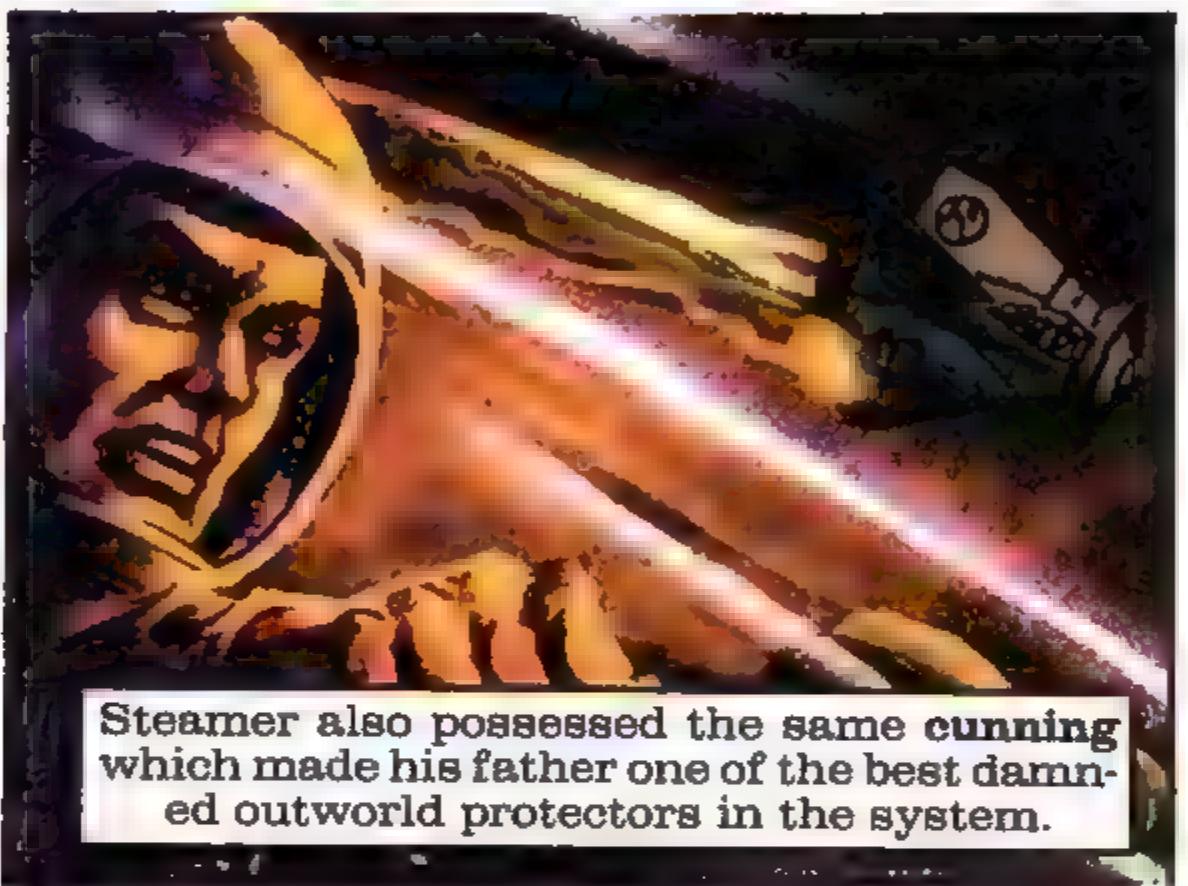
Like his father, Steamer had it all. Born with a natural aptitude for flight, the boy, though only thirteen, had the innate courage of a hardened warrior..



Out of respect for Sam, the youth was assigned his father's retired fighter number; thirteen.



He bore it proudly, aggressively, in spite of the more mature, more experienced cadets he was so often forced to oppose.



Steamer also possessed the same cunning which made his father one of the best damned outworld protectors in the system.



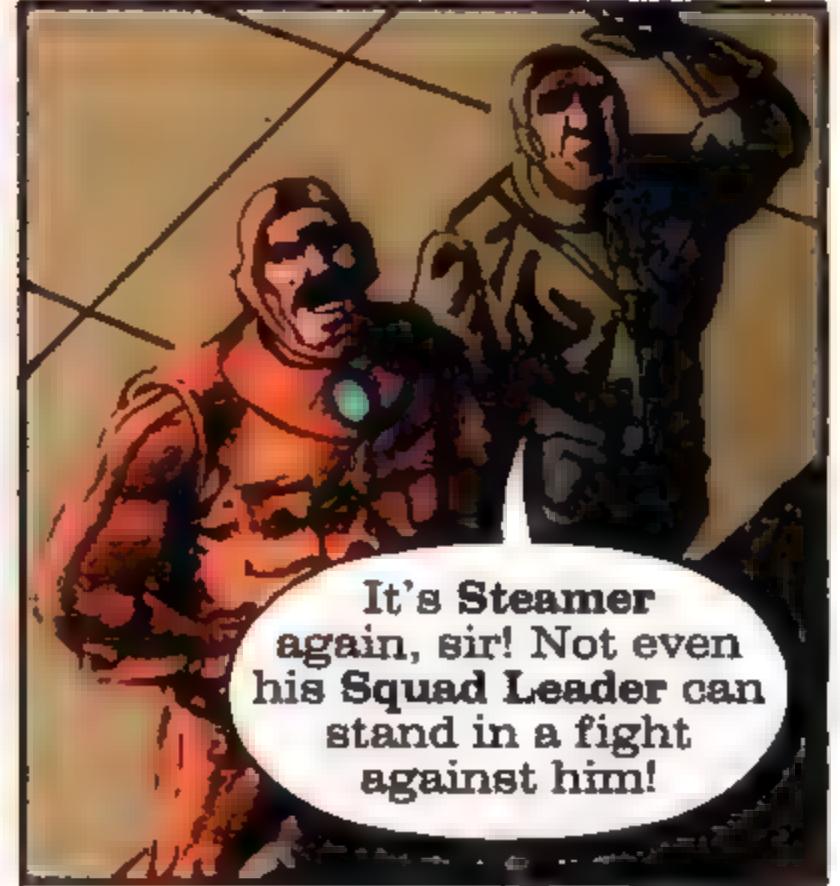
Exercising that cunning, the boy often employed his father's tried and proven patented aerial techniques.



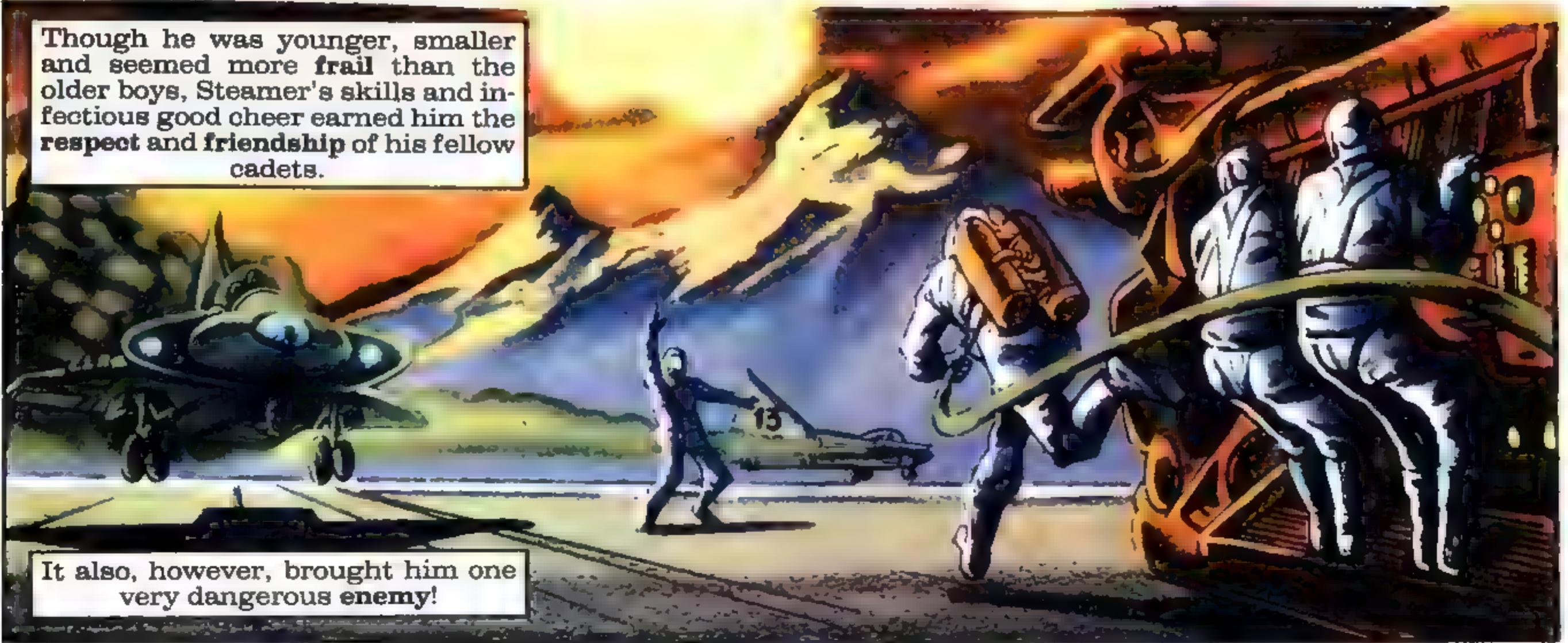
Like a sly fox, he would lead the hound a merry chase . . . only to turn on him at the least expected moment, quickly, mercilessly springing for the kill!



It's Steamer again, sir! Not even his Squad Leader can stand in a fight against him!



Though he was younger, smaller and seemed more frail than the older boys, Steamer's skills and infectious good cheer earned him the respect and friendship of his fellow cadets.



It also, however, brought him one very dangerous enemy!



Good show, Steam! That's three times running you've made a horse's ass out of Becker!



Colonel Hawk wants to personally congratulate you, boy. You and your Nav-rob get your tails on over there!



You do great honor to your family name, son. Your father has every right to be proud.

Thank you, Colonel.

Keep flying like that and you'll earn a place in his frontier squadron, yet!

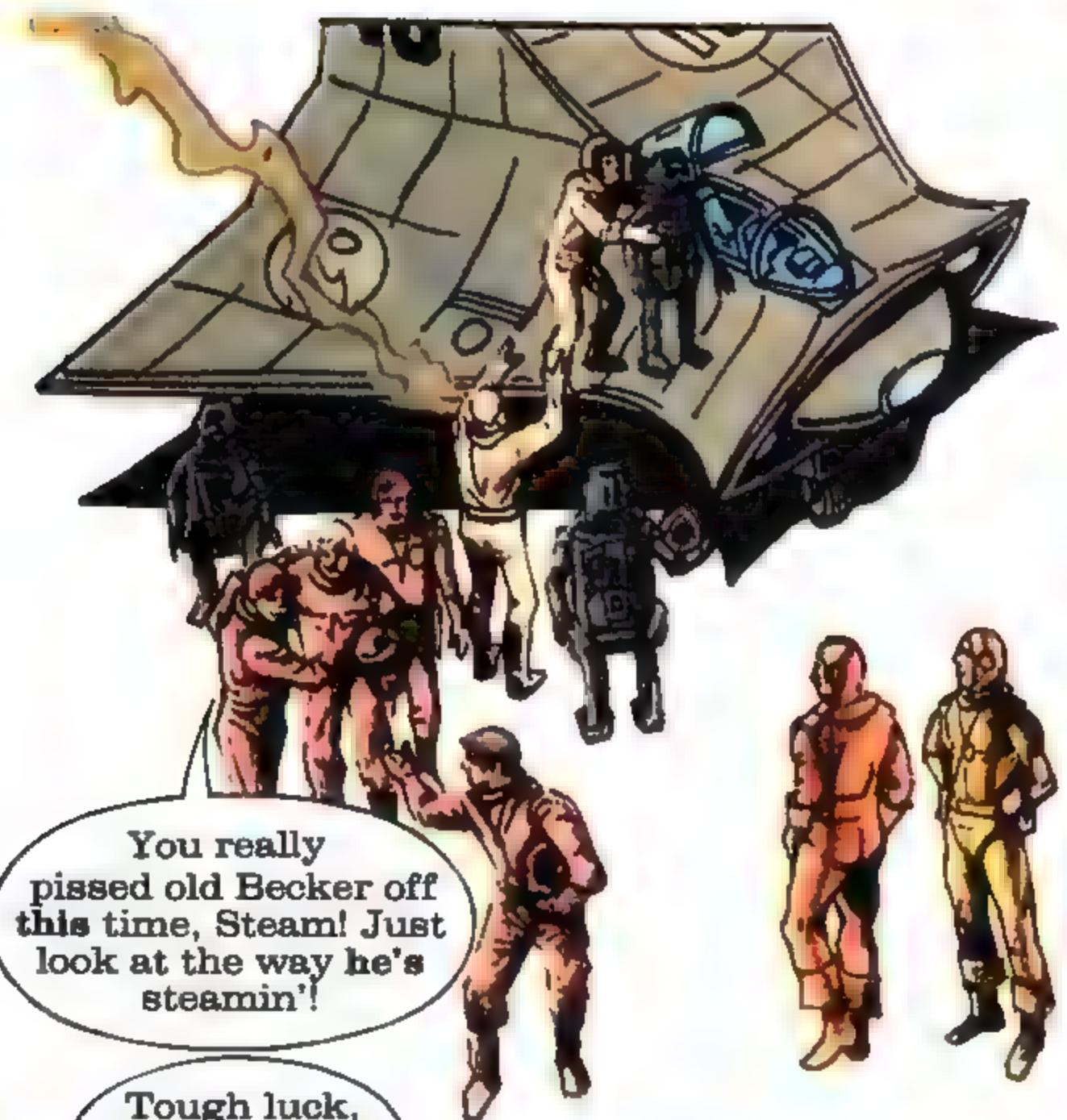


Damn that snot-nosed prick! Three times he's gotten in a lucky shot!

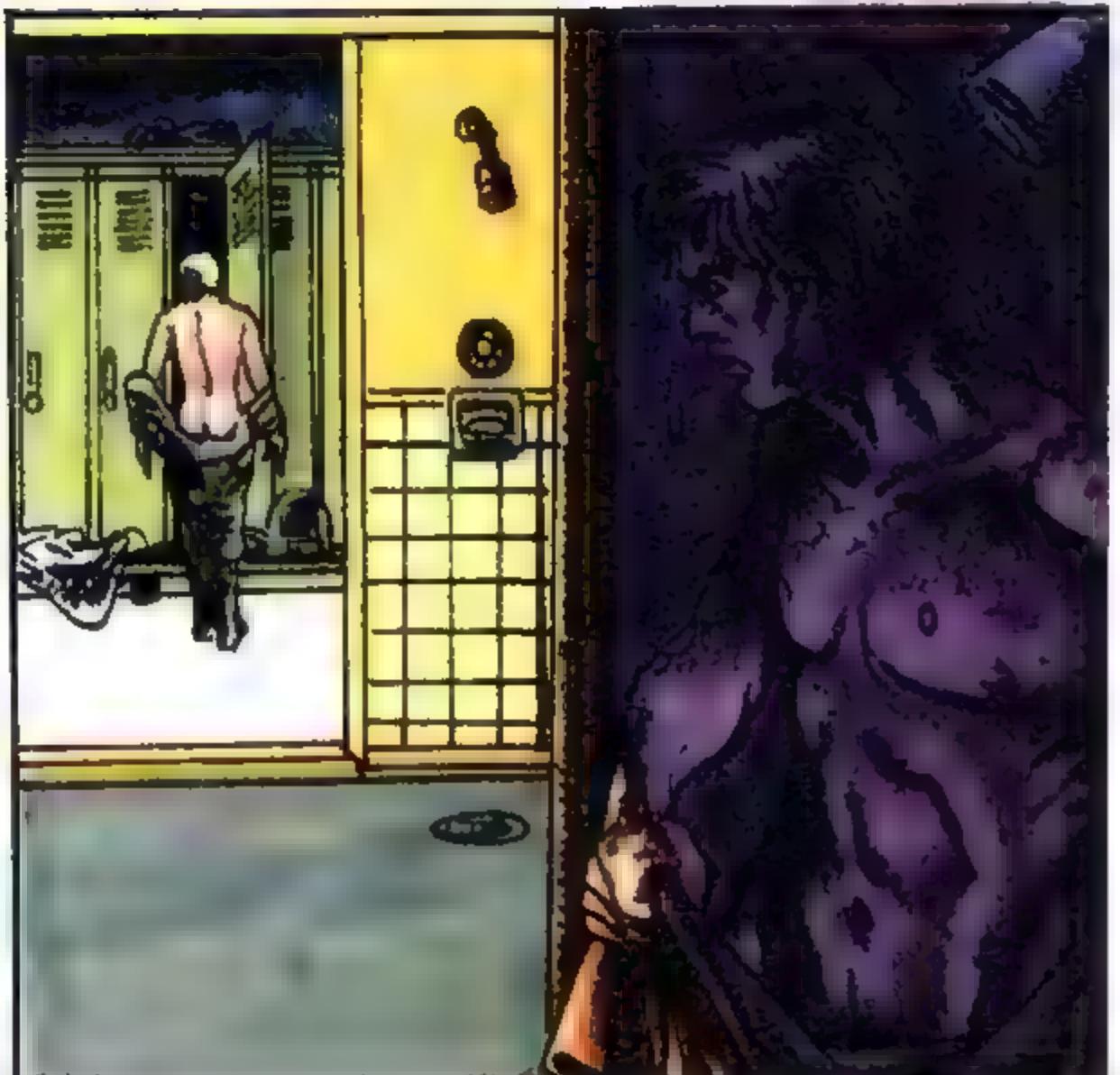
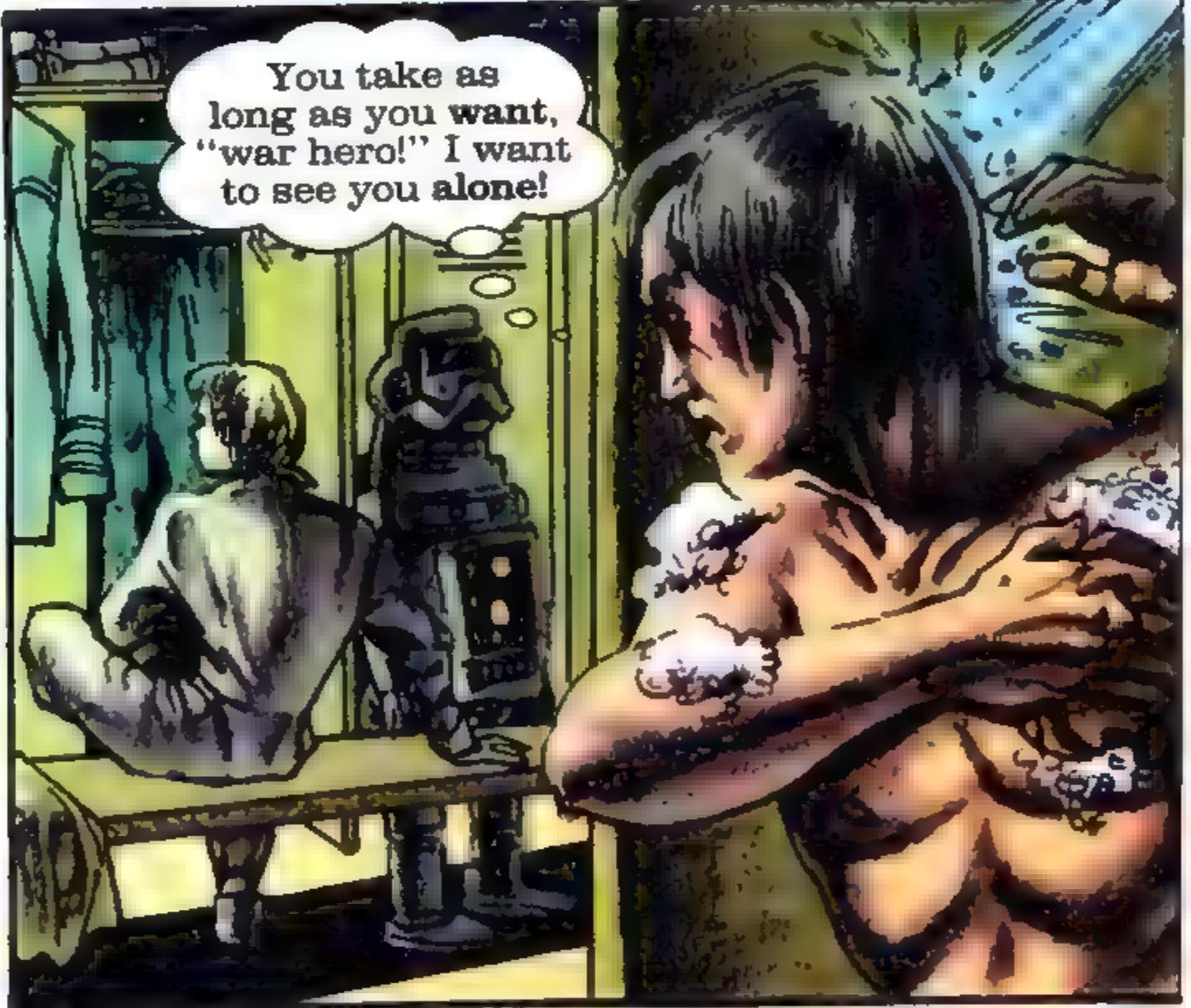
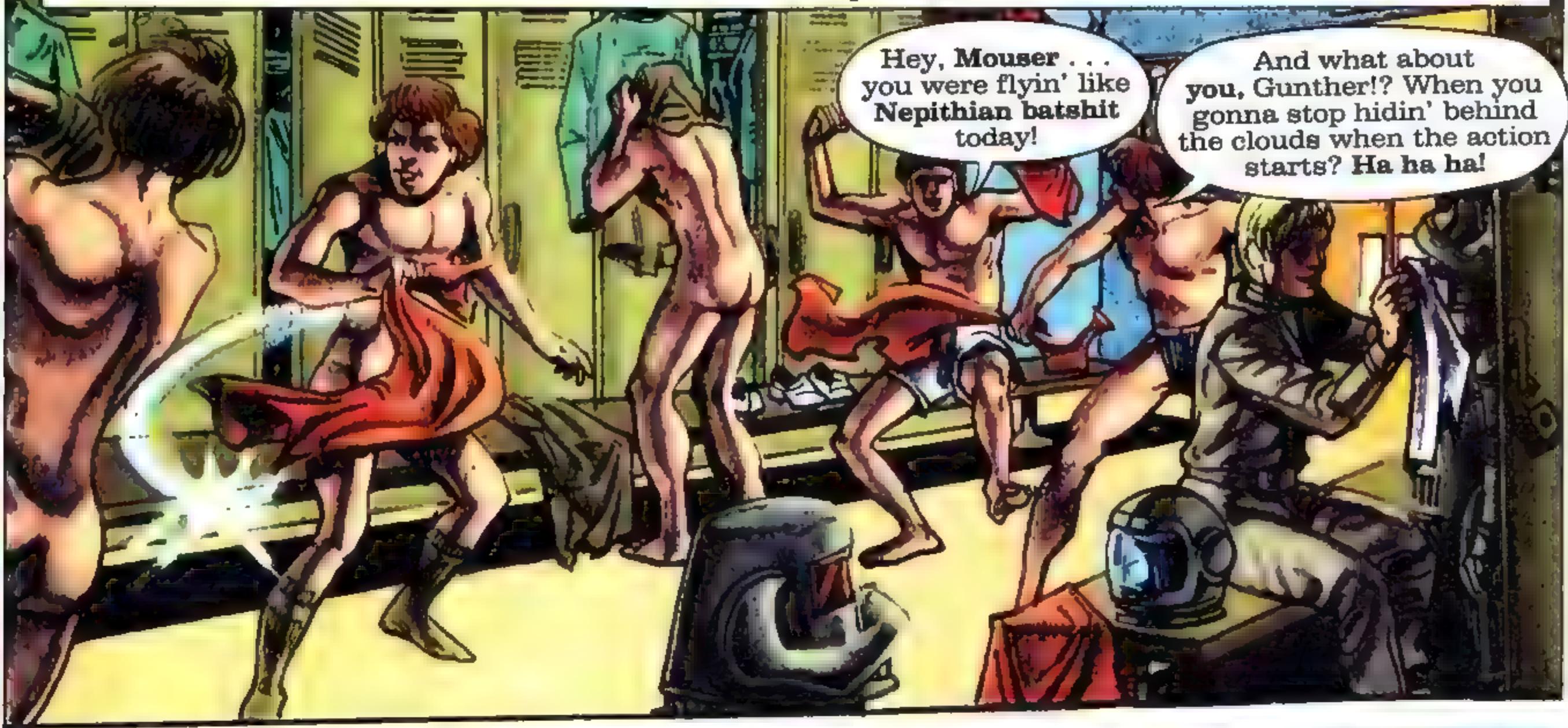


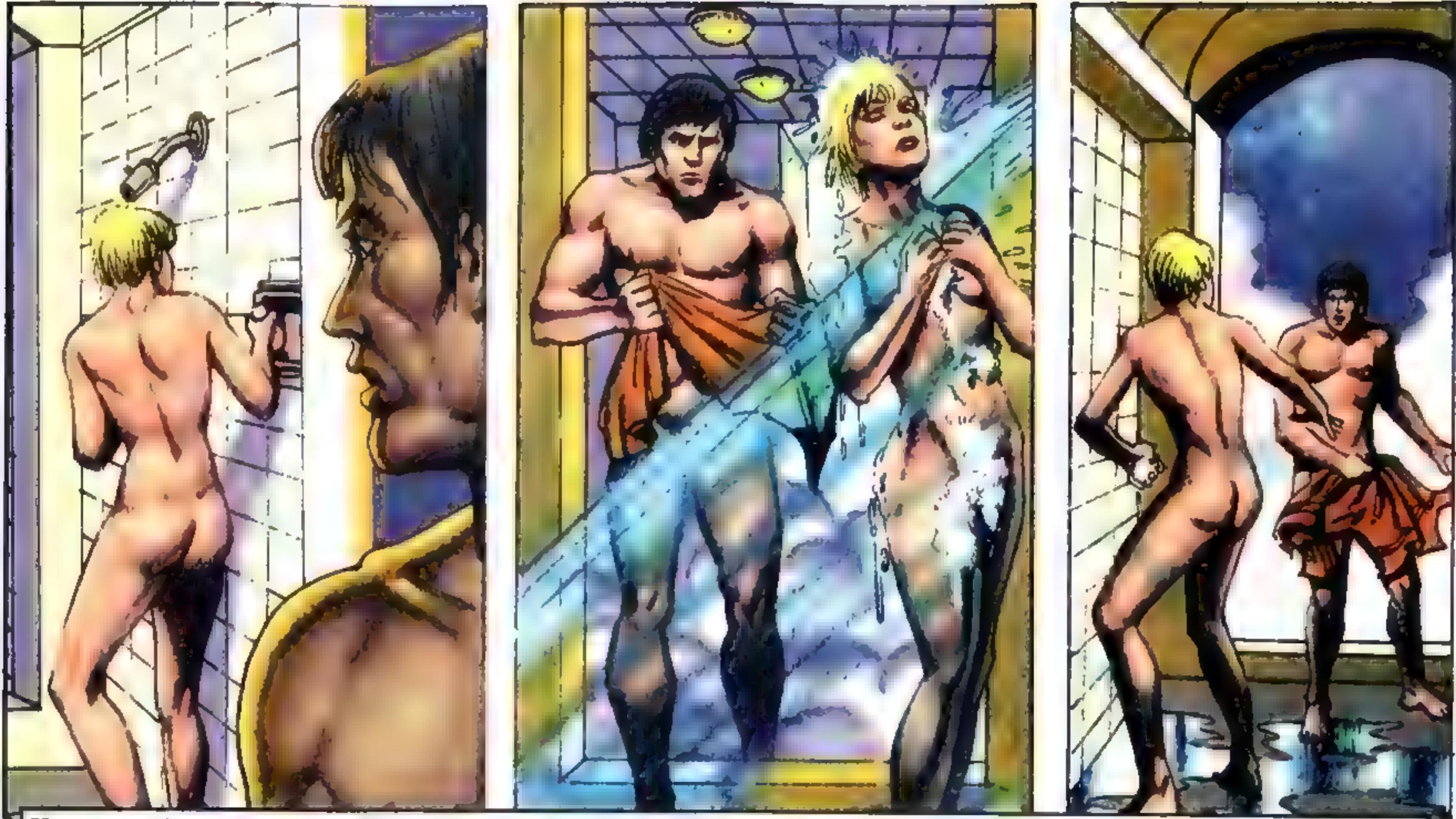
I'm gonna burn that little shit if it's the last thing I do!

Though none of us realized it at the time, Steamer's fleeting moments of triumph at the Academy were destined to be short-lived. An invisible cloud of doom hung over the boy which was to curse him for the rest of his life.



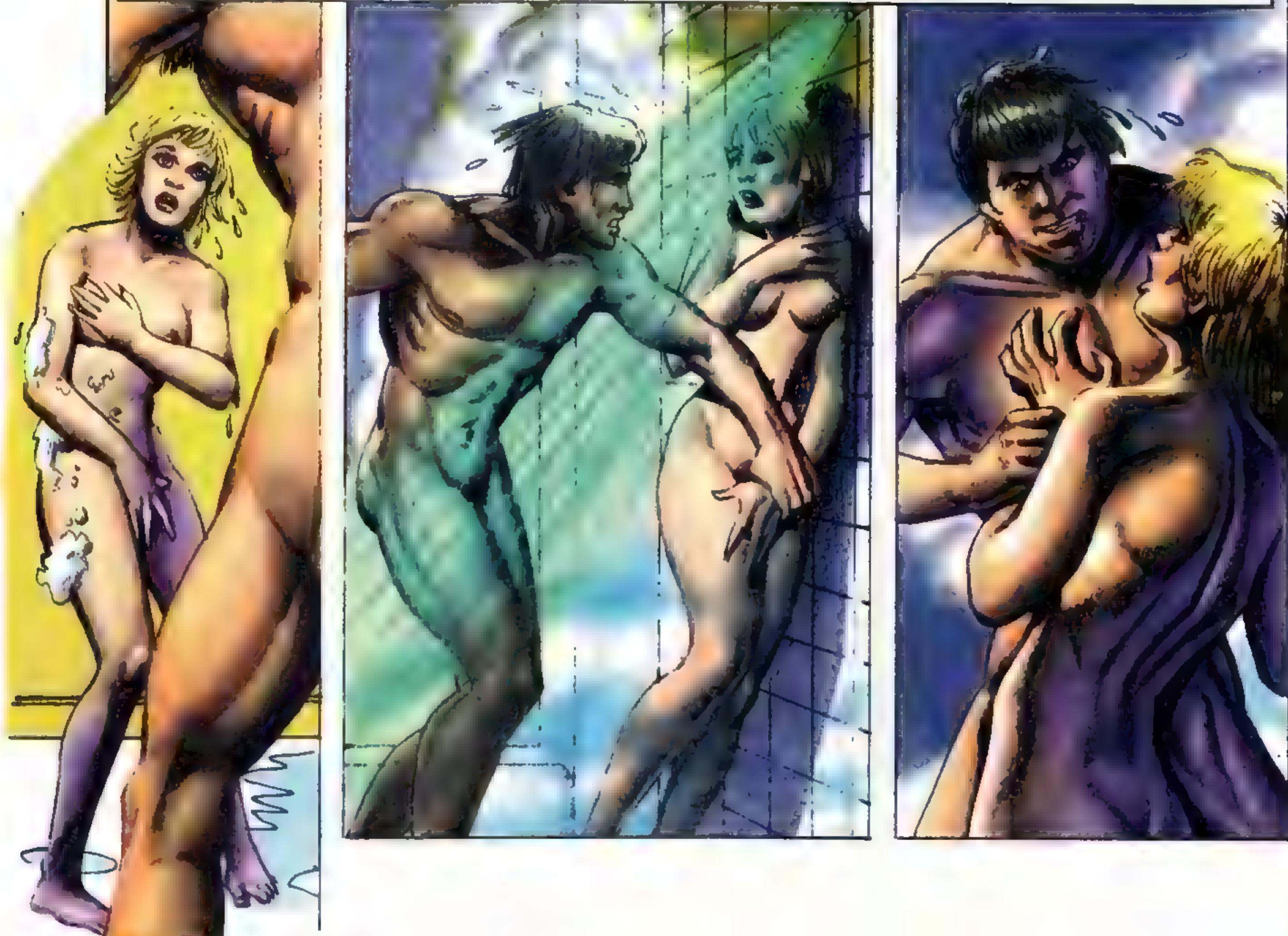
Neither Colonel Hawk nor myself were present, and have only the testimony of the other boys as to what occurred in the suit-up rooms.

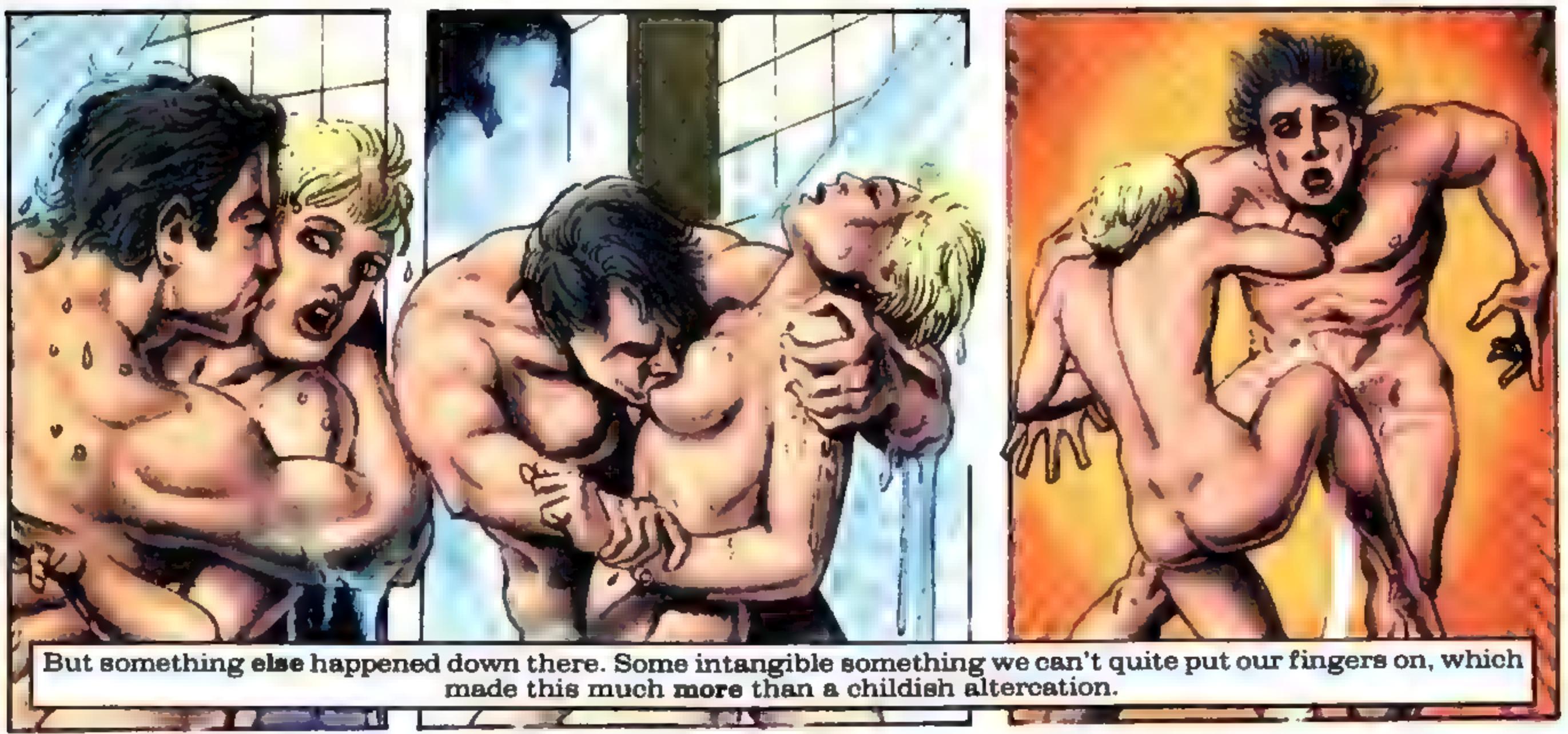




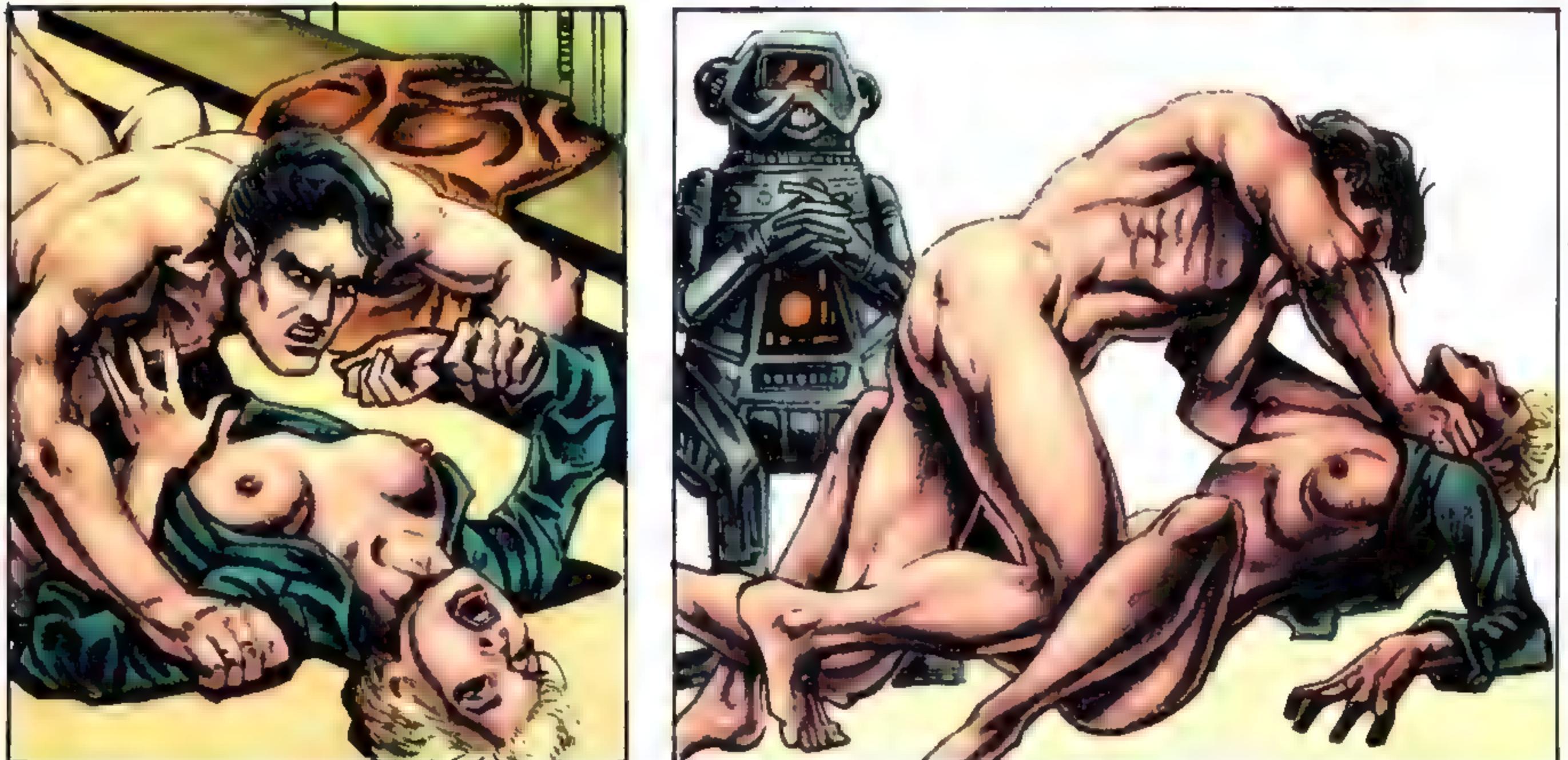
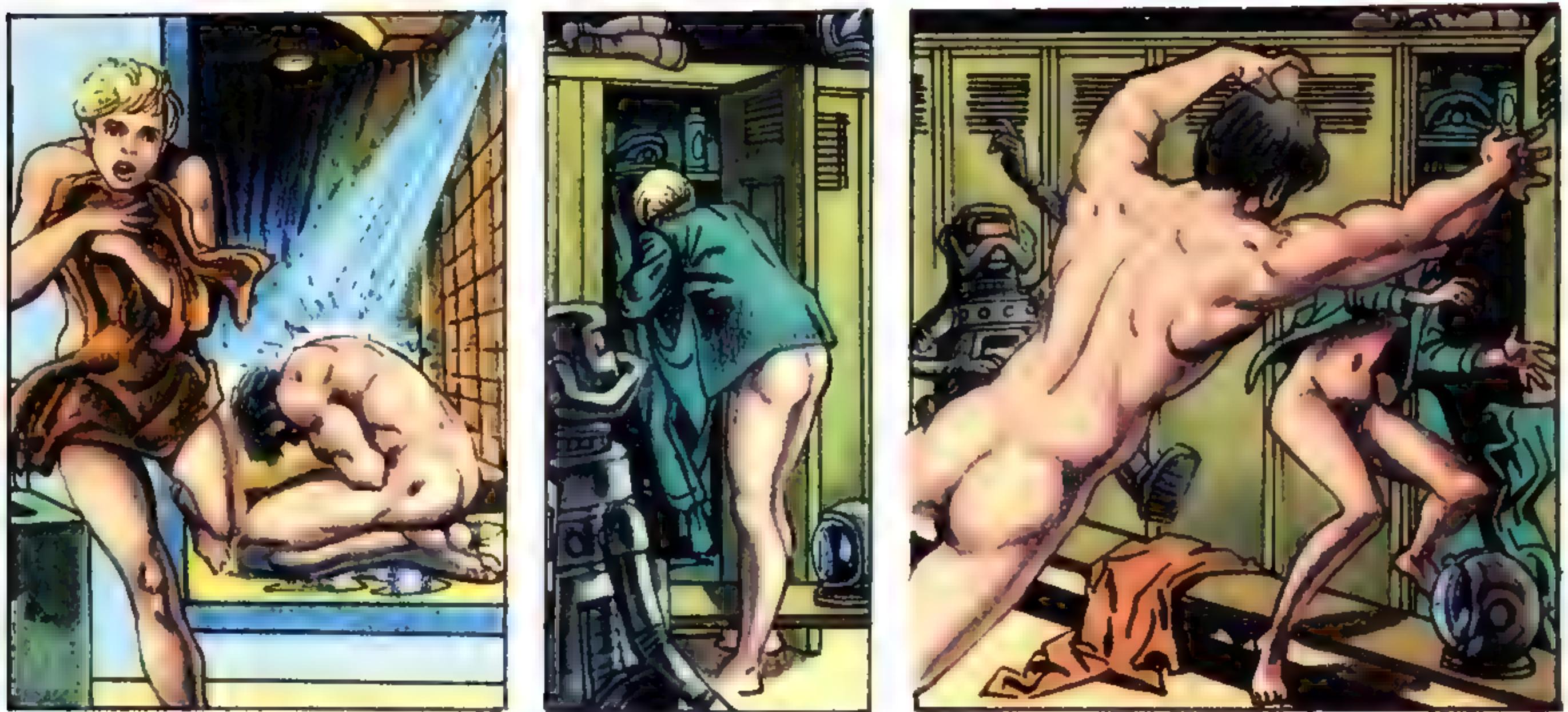
Yet, even the cadets could only tell us so much. The rest we've tried to piece together from the meager clues that were left behind.

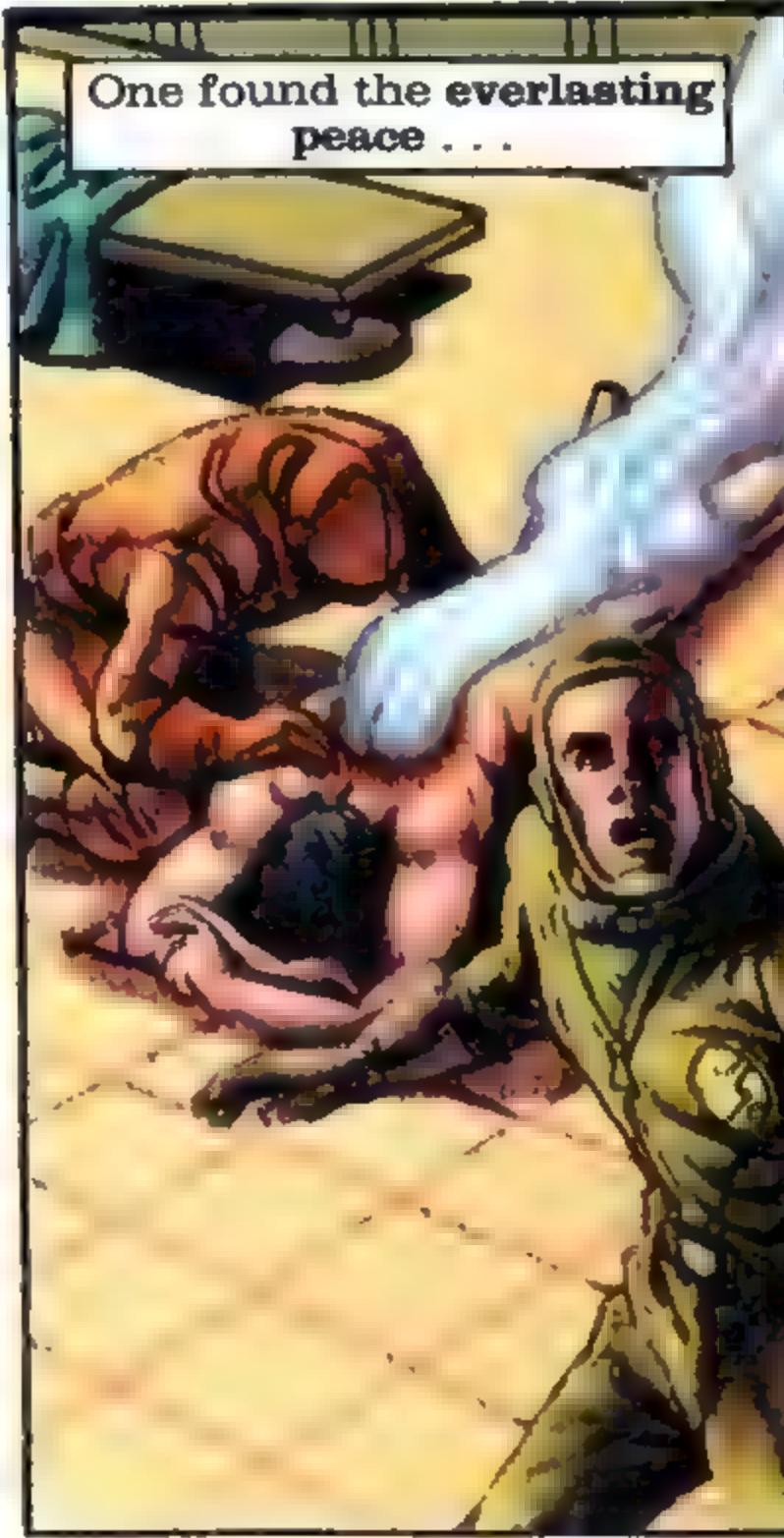
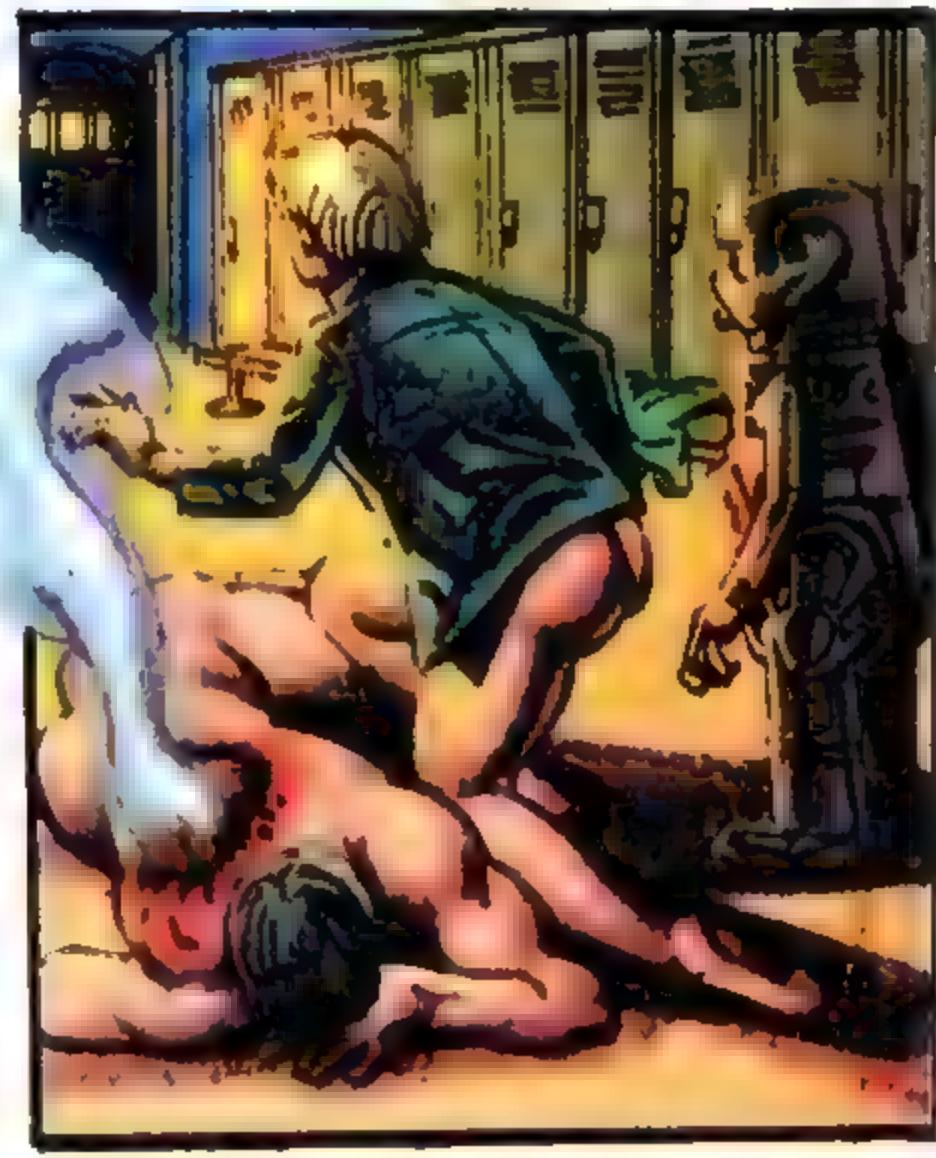
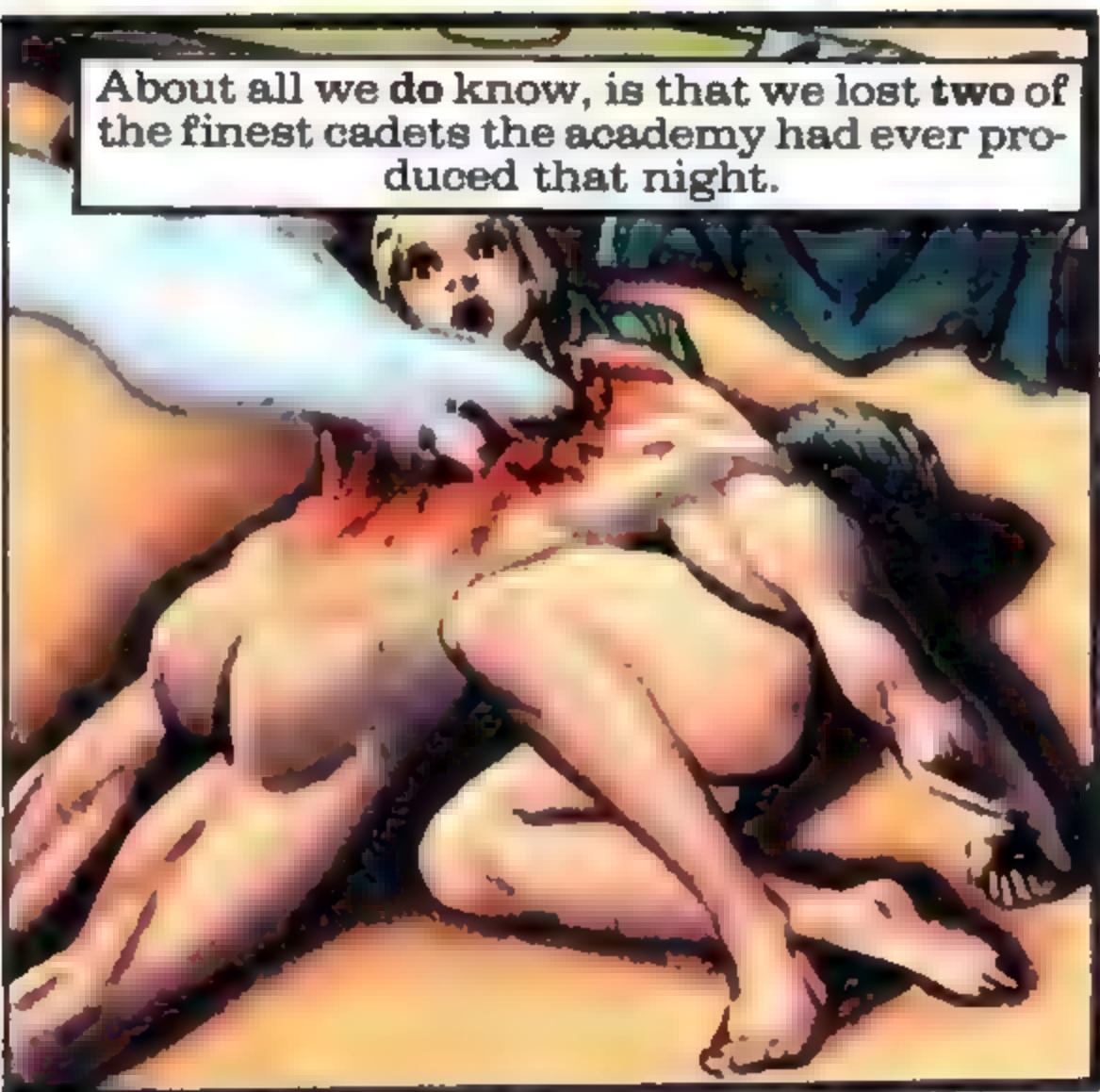
Apparently, Becker, nursing his wounded pride, was lying in wait for the younger and smaller cadet in the showers. No doubt there were angry words, maybe even some heated punches thrown. Though outweighed and dwarfed by his Squad Leader, Steamer would not have allowed himself to be intimidated. He would have given as good as he took. And after the first blood was drawn, the entire incident would have been forgotten . . . just like any other schoolboy row.





But something else happened down there. Some intangible something we can't quite put our fingers on, which made this much more than a childish altercation.





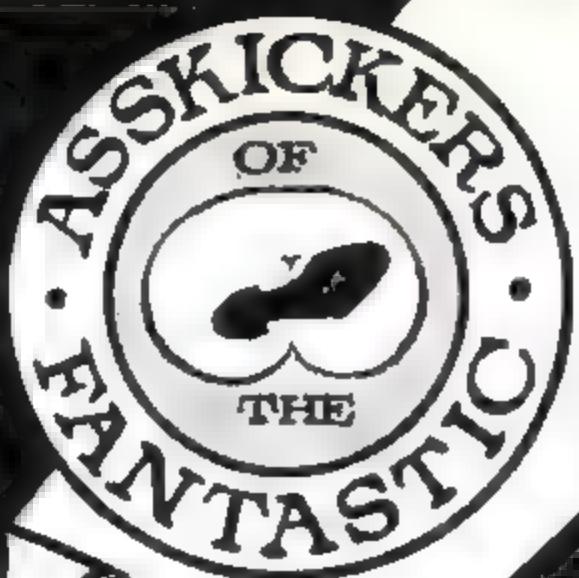
to be continued . . .



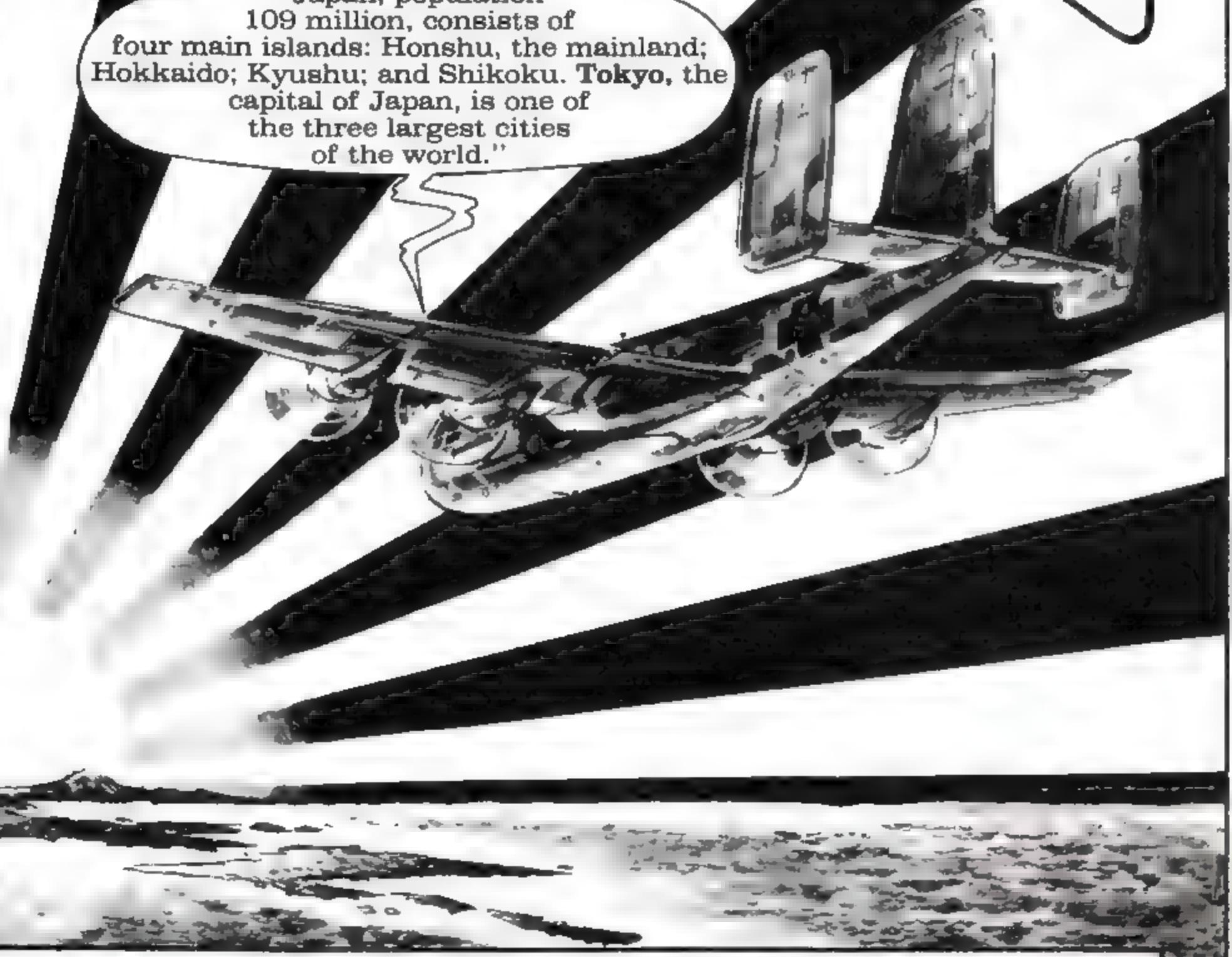
Japan. The Island Empire. Land of the Rising Sun. Home of small ears, kabuki dancers, very complicated cameras with lots of expensive attachments, and more monsters than you can shake a stick at.

As the sun rises on the Land of the Rising Sun, a Red Cross cargo plane wings steadily toward it. And aboard the plane, Rex Havoc and the Asskickers of the Fantastic prepare for the most dangerous mission of their lives... plus a small vacation, if they can manage it.

REX HAVOC and the **ASSKICKERS of the FANTASTIC**

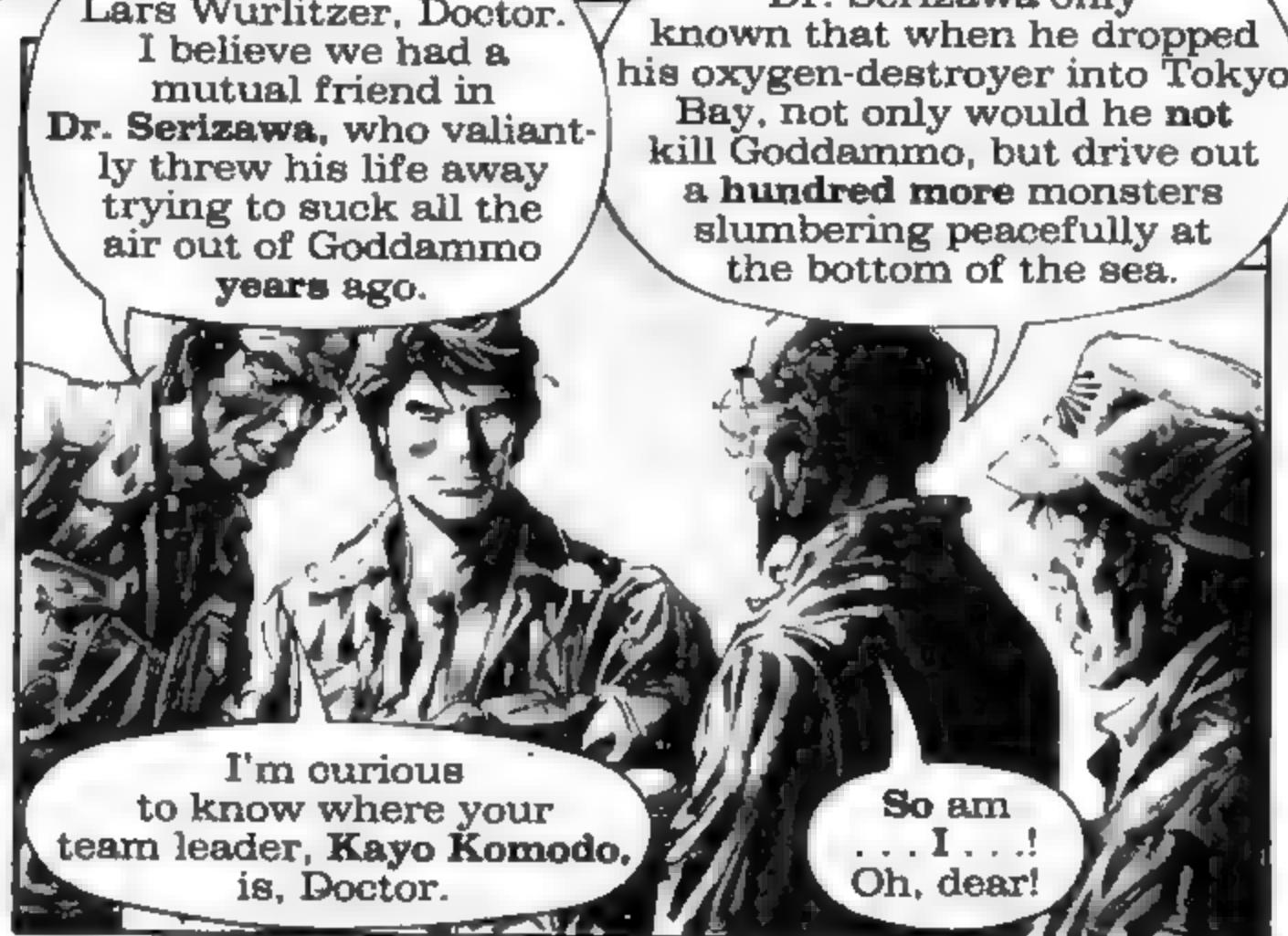
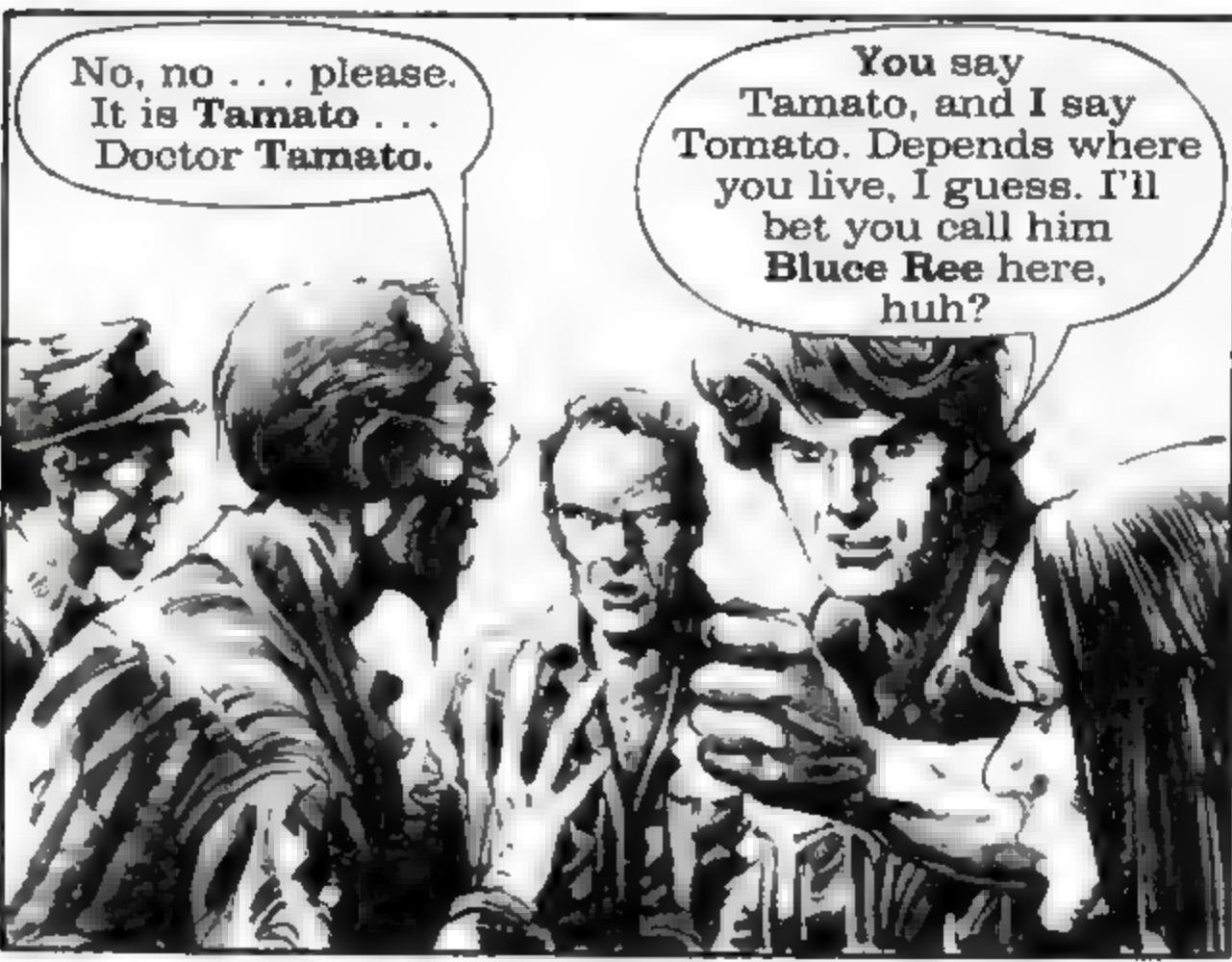
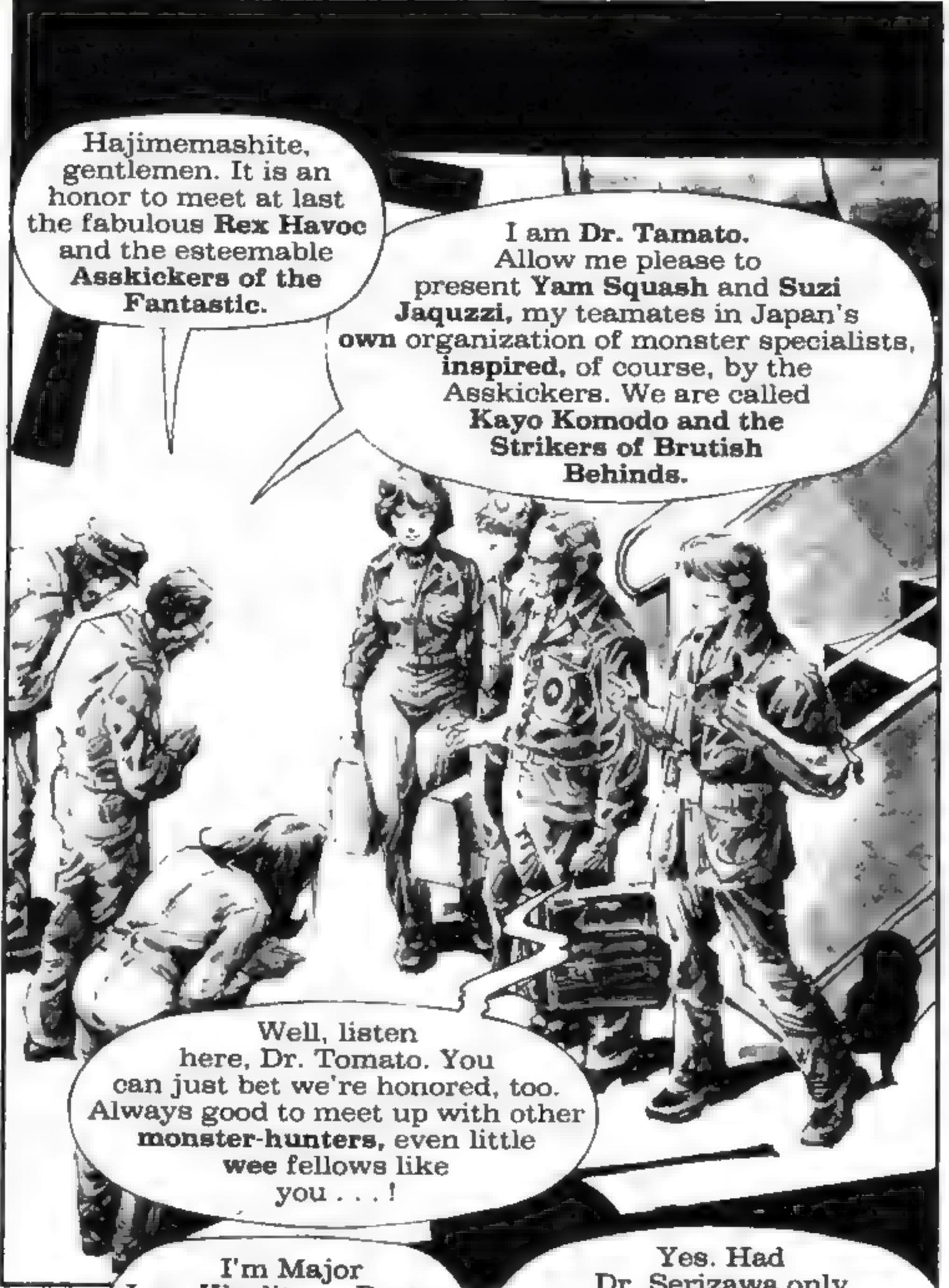


"Japan, population 109 million, consists of four main islands: Honshu, the mainland; Hokkaido; Kyushu; and Shikoku. Tokyo, the capital of Japan, is one of the three largest cities of the world."





Tokyo International Airport.





Ten minutes later, the helicopter transporting the Asskickers and the Strikers of Brutish Behinds, approaches the very heart of Tokyo, and the startled monster-hunters come face-to-face with their darkest nightmare!

Upright, it stands as high as a forty-story building; it is fifteen times more massive than the largest dinosaur; it weighs nearly twelve hundred tons; and it eats whole stadiums of people at a single sitting.

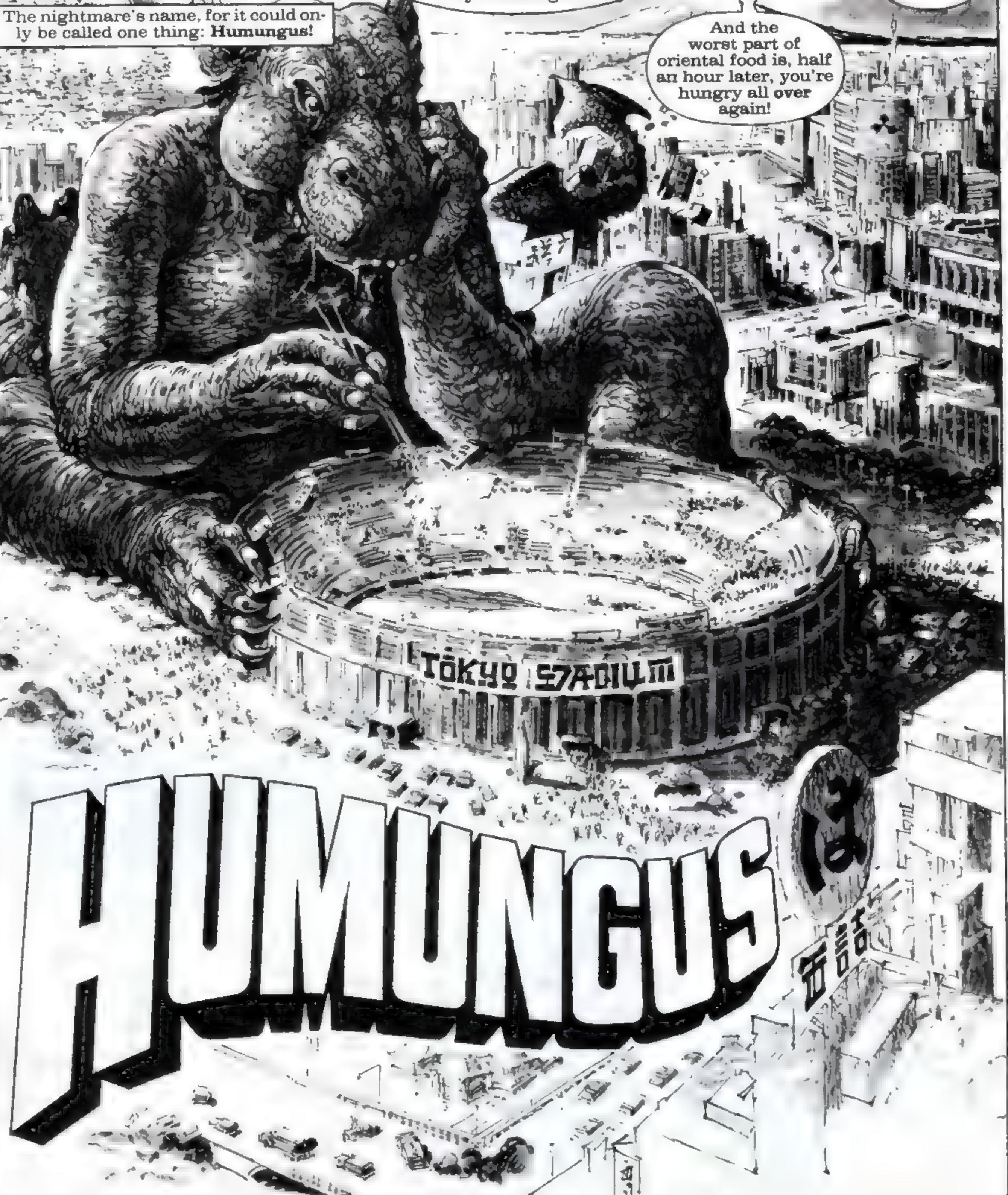
The nightmare's name, for it could only be called one thing: Humungus!

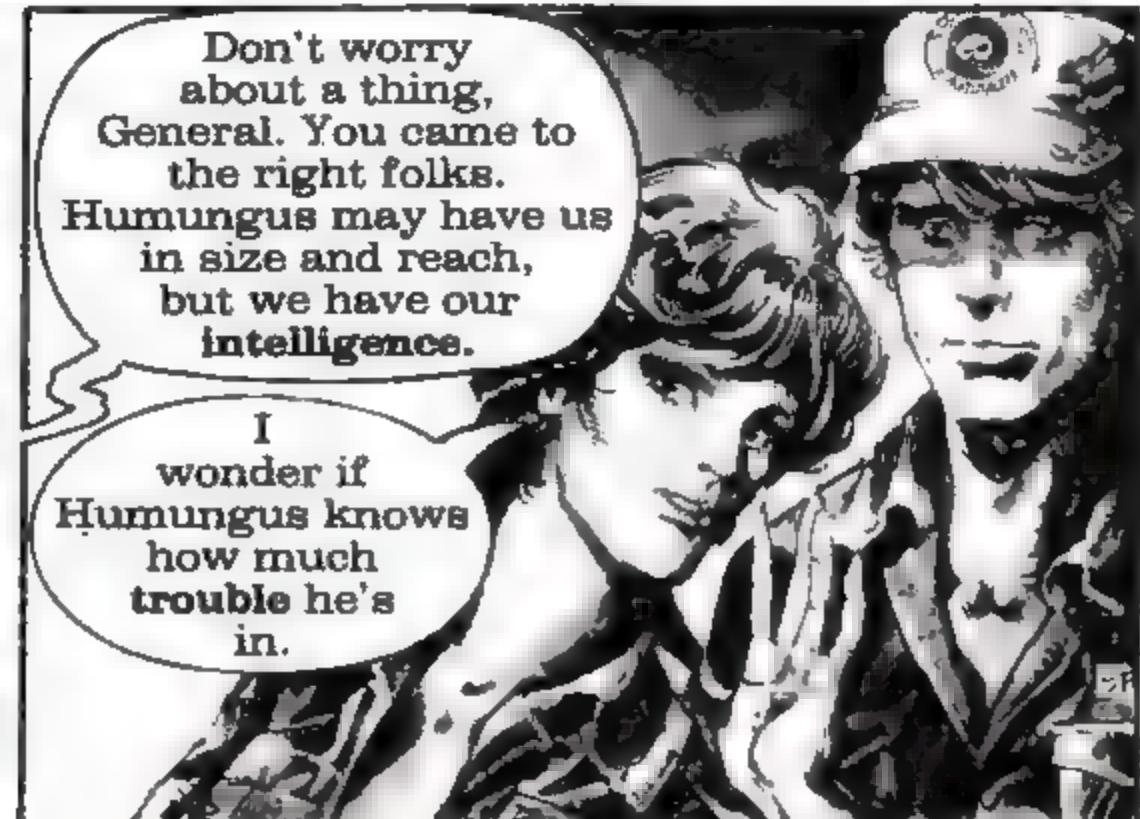
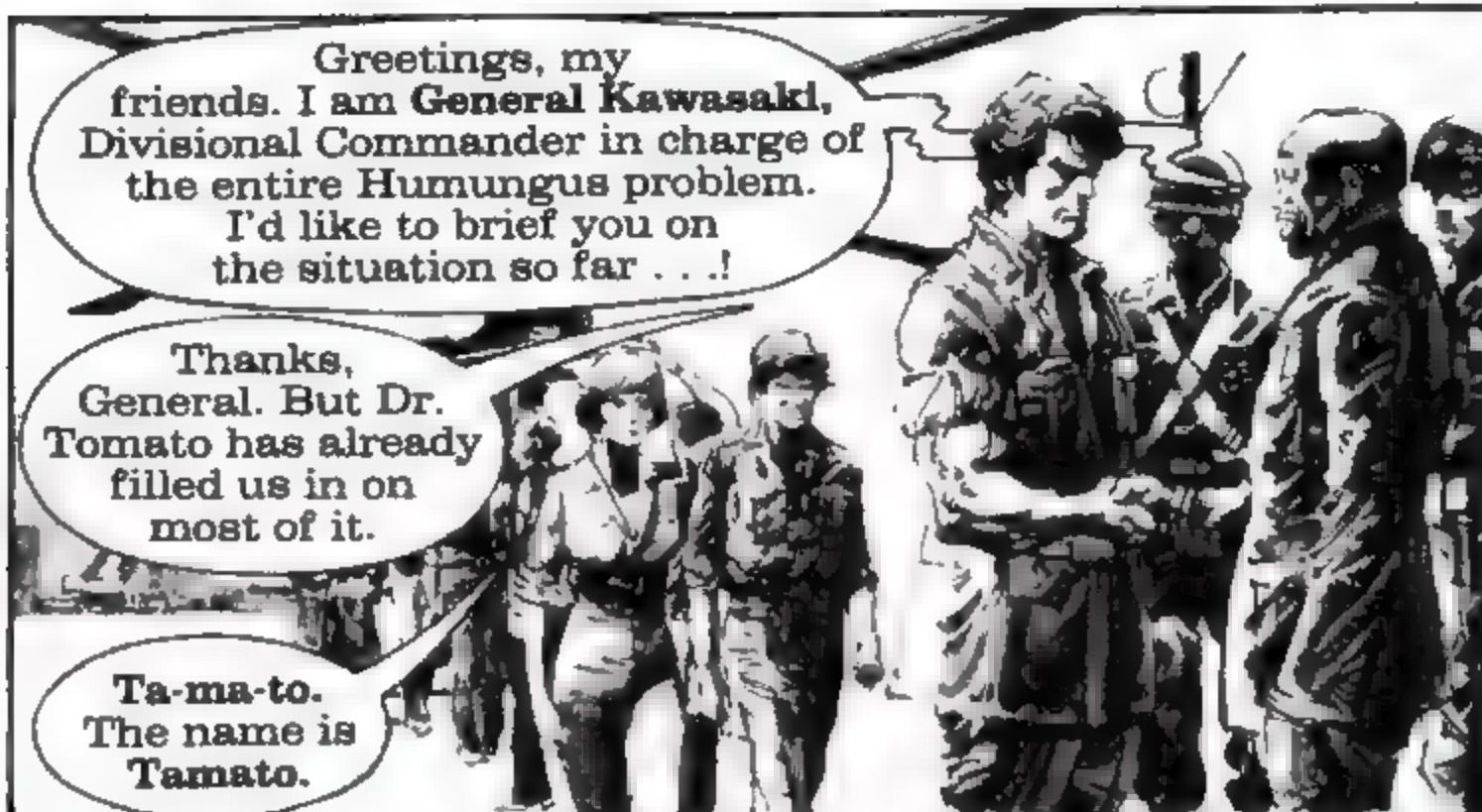
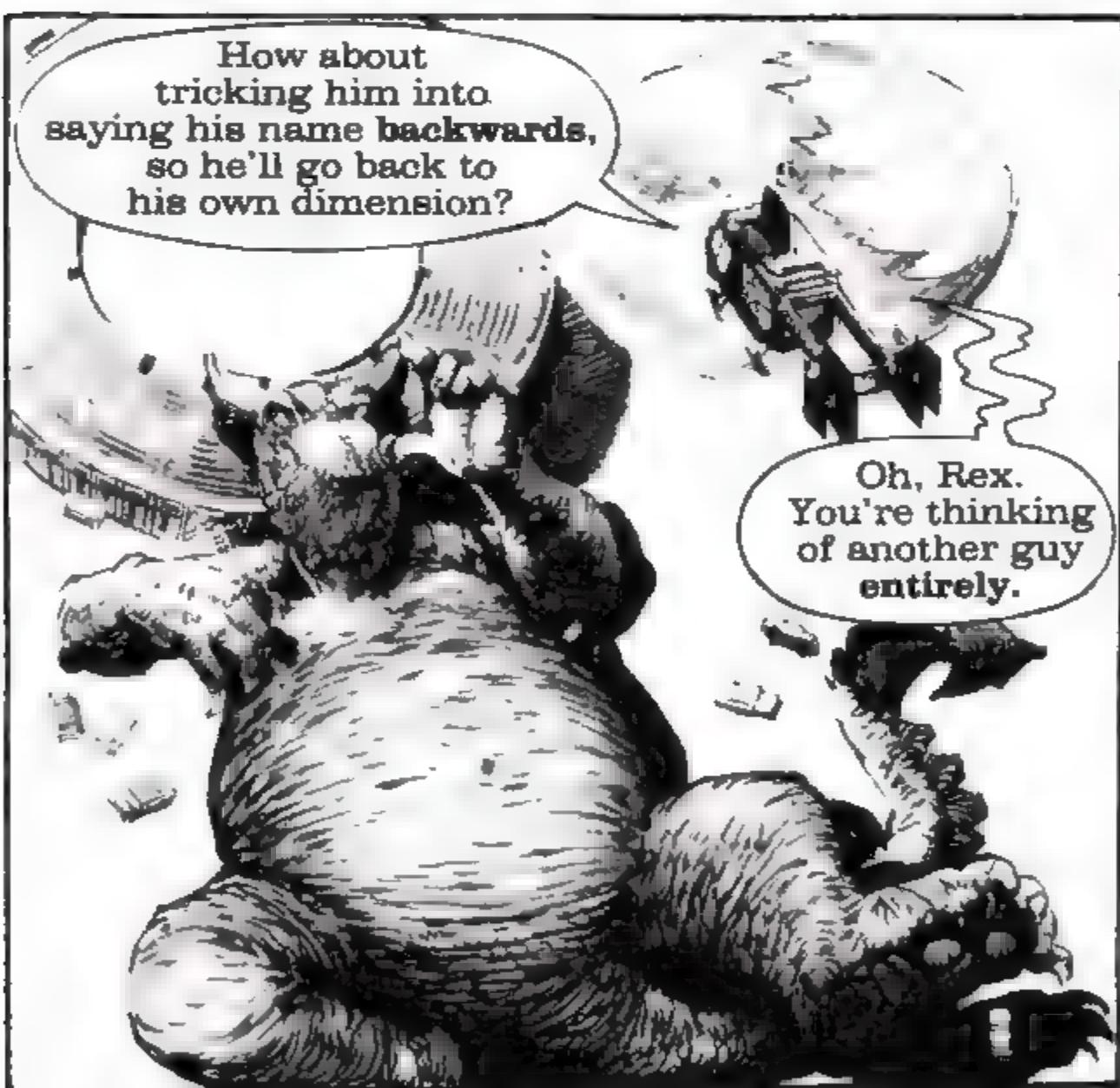
Everything we've tried has failed against Humungus. Bombs, rockets, fire, radiation . . . our armed forces are powerless to stop it.

And every day, the death toll climbs, hundreds of citizens snatched from their offices, sucked out of their automobiles, and casually devoured by Humungus.

REX!!

And the worst part of oriental food is, half an hour later, you're hungry all over again!





Honshu National Guard Division Headquarters, and presently Humungus Crisis Control Center.

NATIONAL GUARD
ARMORY

But don't you folks usually have other monsters to fight your monsters for you? How about that?

We've tried every monster on Toho Island. No one will face Humungus. The only one we haven't tried is Goddammo . . . who so far has refused even to see us. Word is he may be running scared!

Say, I have an idea. How about we build a giant bathtub for Humungus, and then, while he's bathing, we drop a huge radio into it?

We won't have to do that, young man. Our solution is here!

Allow me to introduce Princess Yin and Princess Yang, who've come all the way from the imaginary kingdom of Titmite to help us.

Good Lord! Tiny twin girls!

You'll recall these are the twin girls who so effectively controlled the giant sludge, Maggotron, with their hypnotic songs.

They have a new act they think could help us against Humungus! Go ahead, girls.

A-B-C-D
Humungus get away from me!
1-2-3-4
You're not my favorite dinosaur!

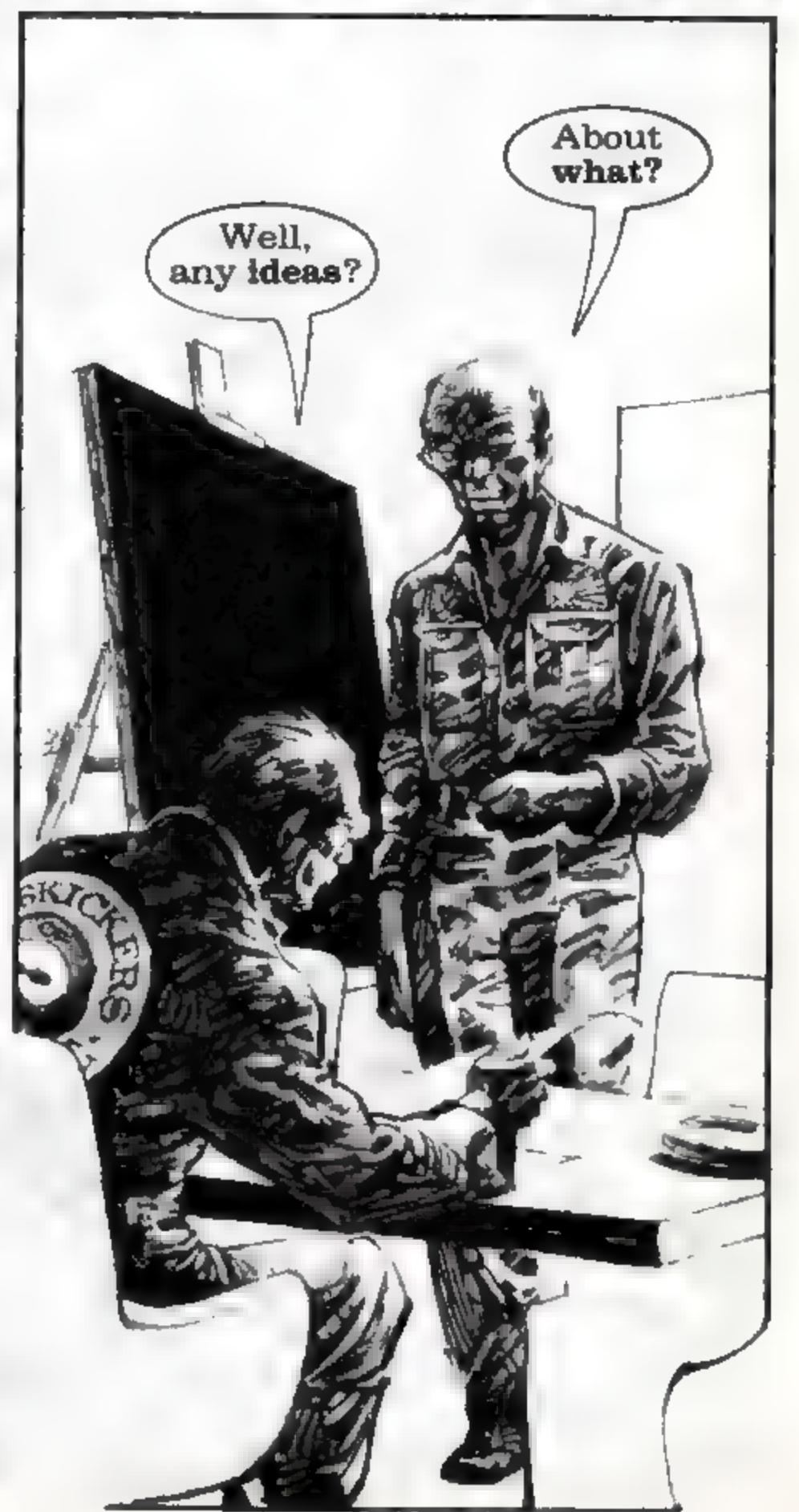
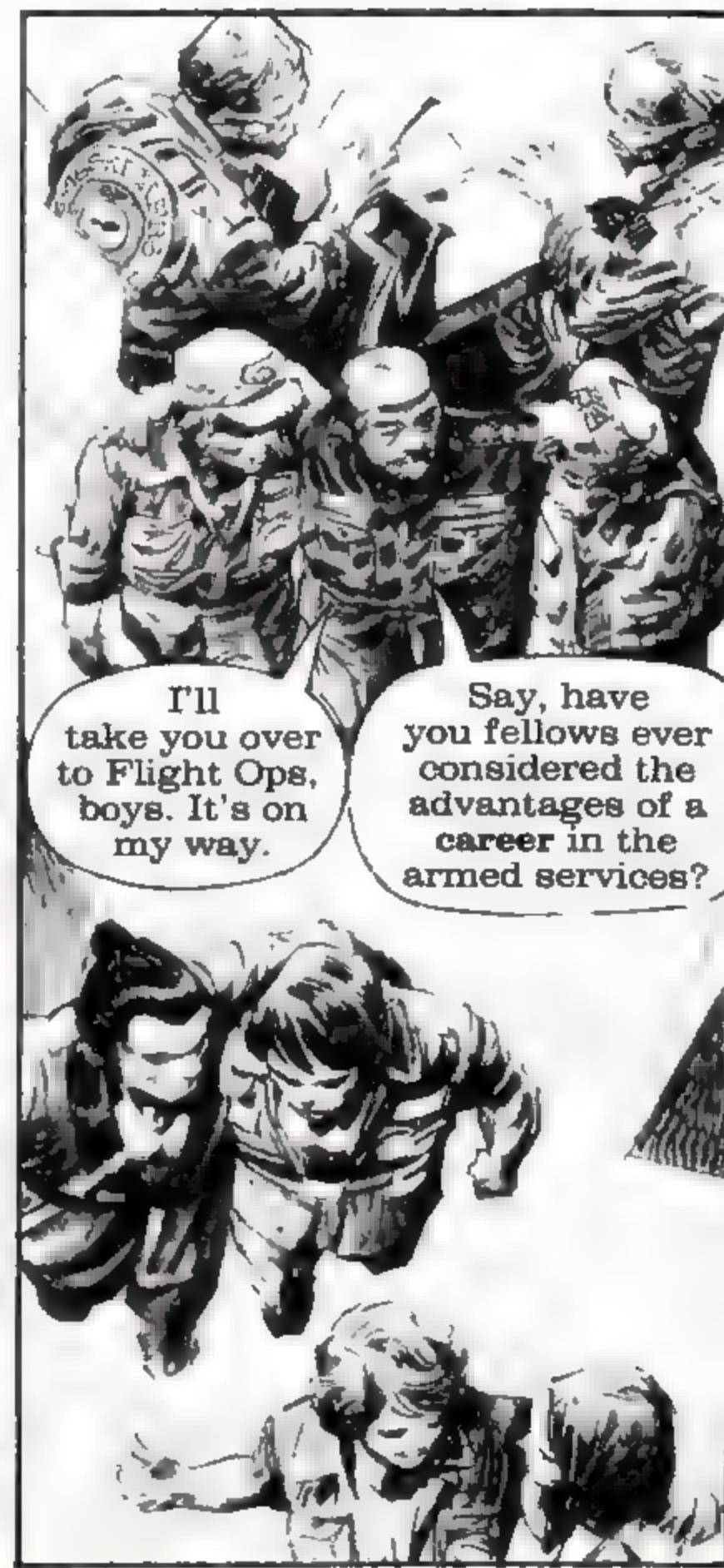
Go, go go Japan!
Whip that monster like nobody can!
Army, Navy, Air Force too!
We'll show that brute a thing or two!

Jesus Christ!
BROWNIES!!

Smack 'em,
somebody!

Now you've done it. You've chased them into a mousehole! They'll never come out!

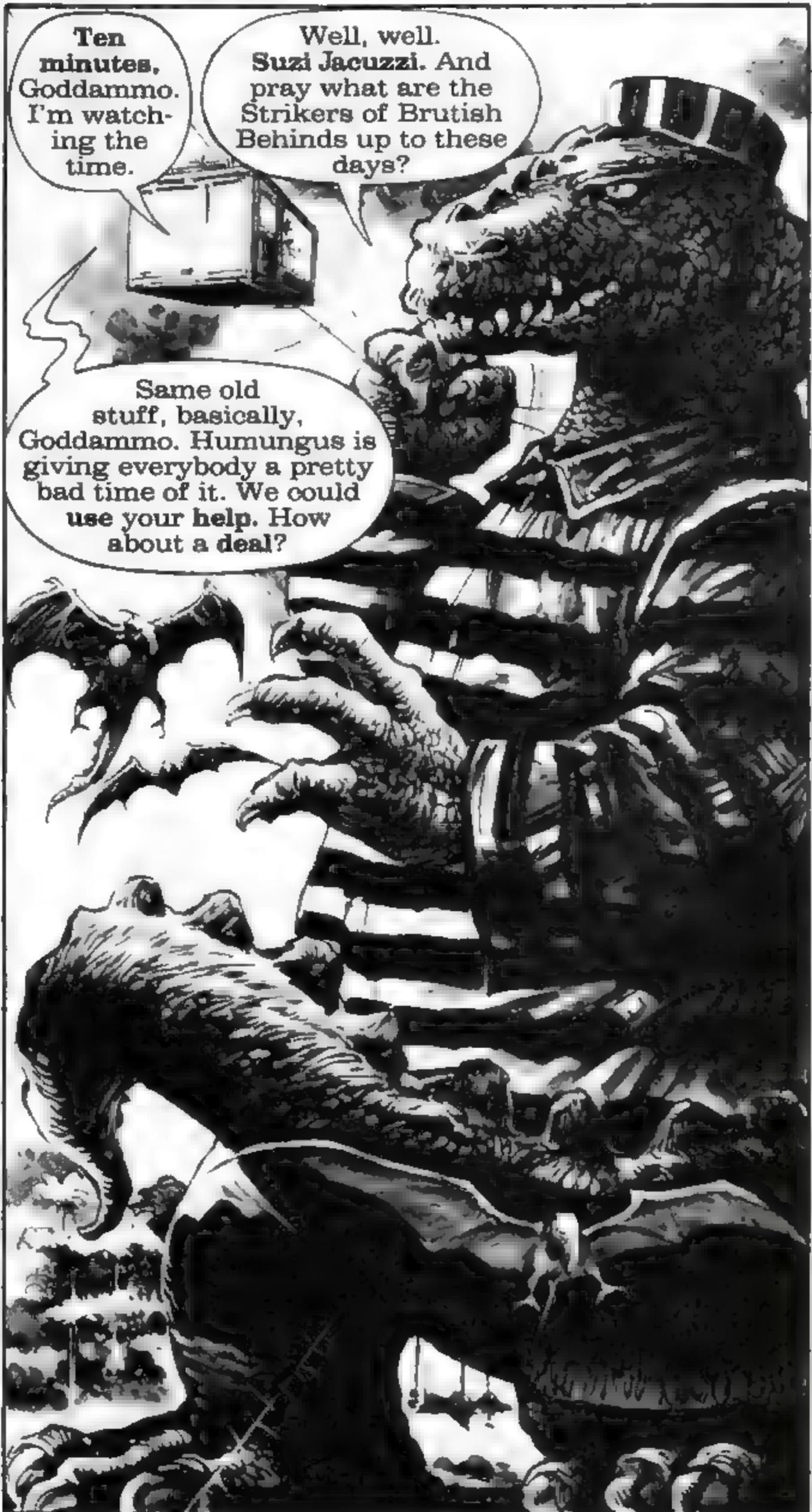
Put a trap out.
You'll get them.

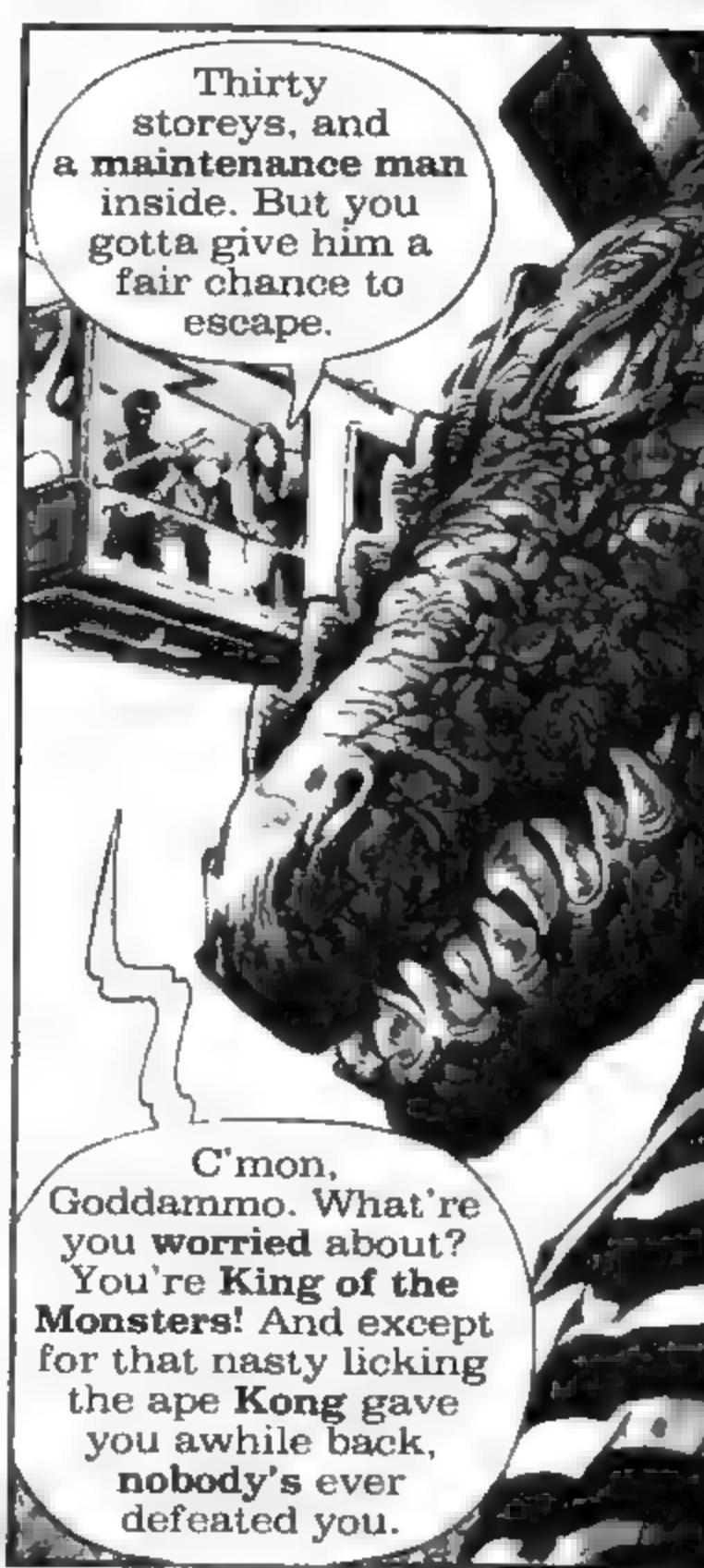
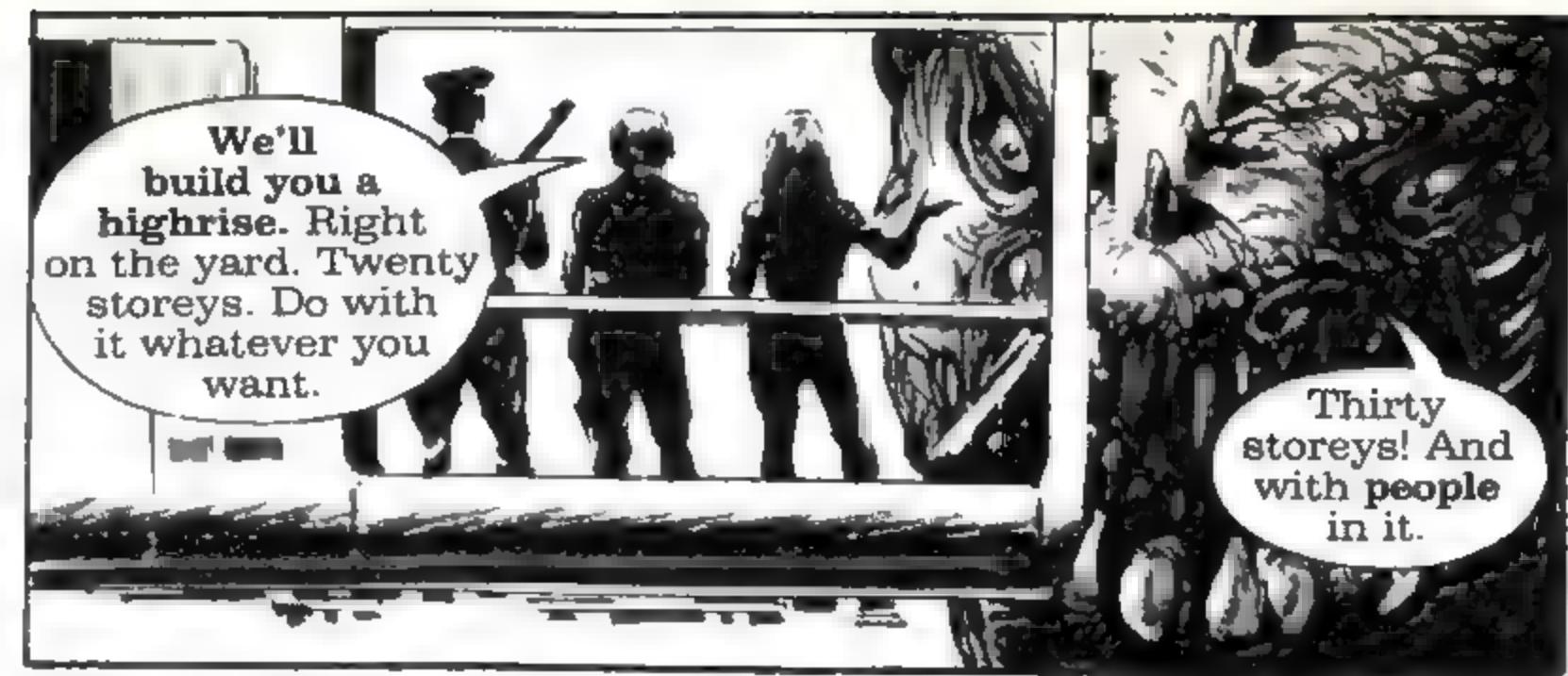
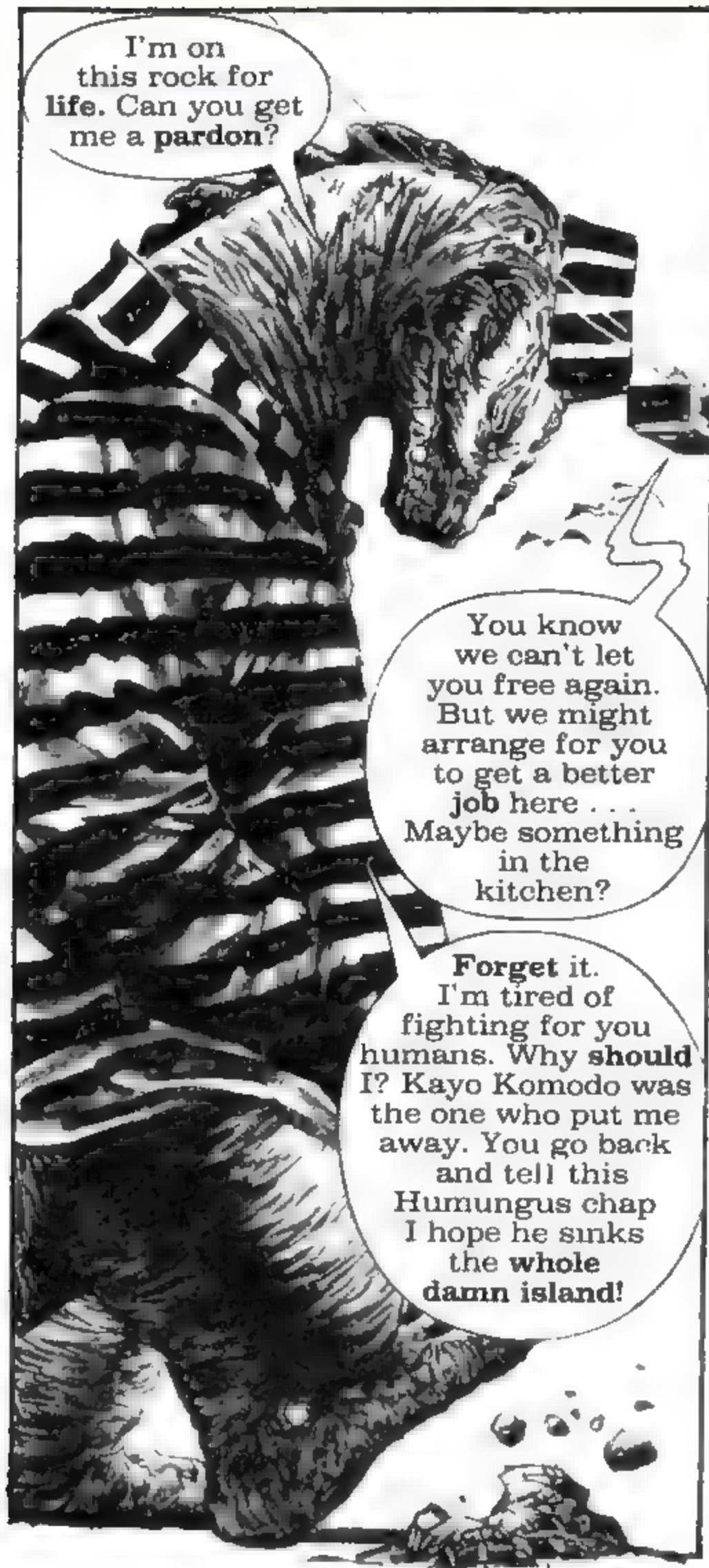


Toho Island: The "Alcatraz" of king-sized monsters. Established in the late 1960s as a humane solution to the growing behemoth crisis in Japan, Toho (called "The Rock" by its inmates) is the end of the line for the most hardened gargantuas.

Insuperable walls five hundred feet high enclose the volcanic island, confining a wide variety of monstrosities, from catastrophic giant moths to world-wrecking jumbo shrimp to angleworms the size of Globemasters, which, left to their own devices, would wrestle landscapes and dropkick skyscrapers without respite.

Skimming toward this colossal calaboose in a police launch, Bruno and Suzi go to meet the only creature on earth which might defeat Humungus.



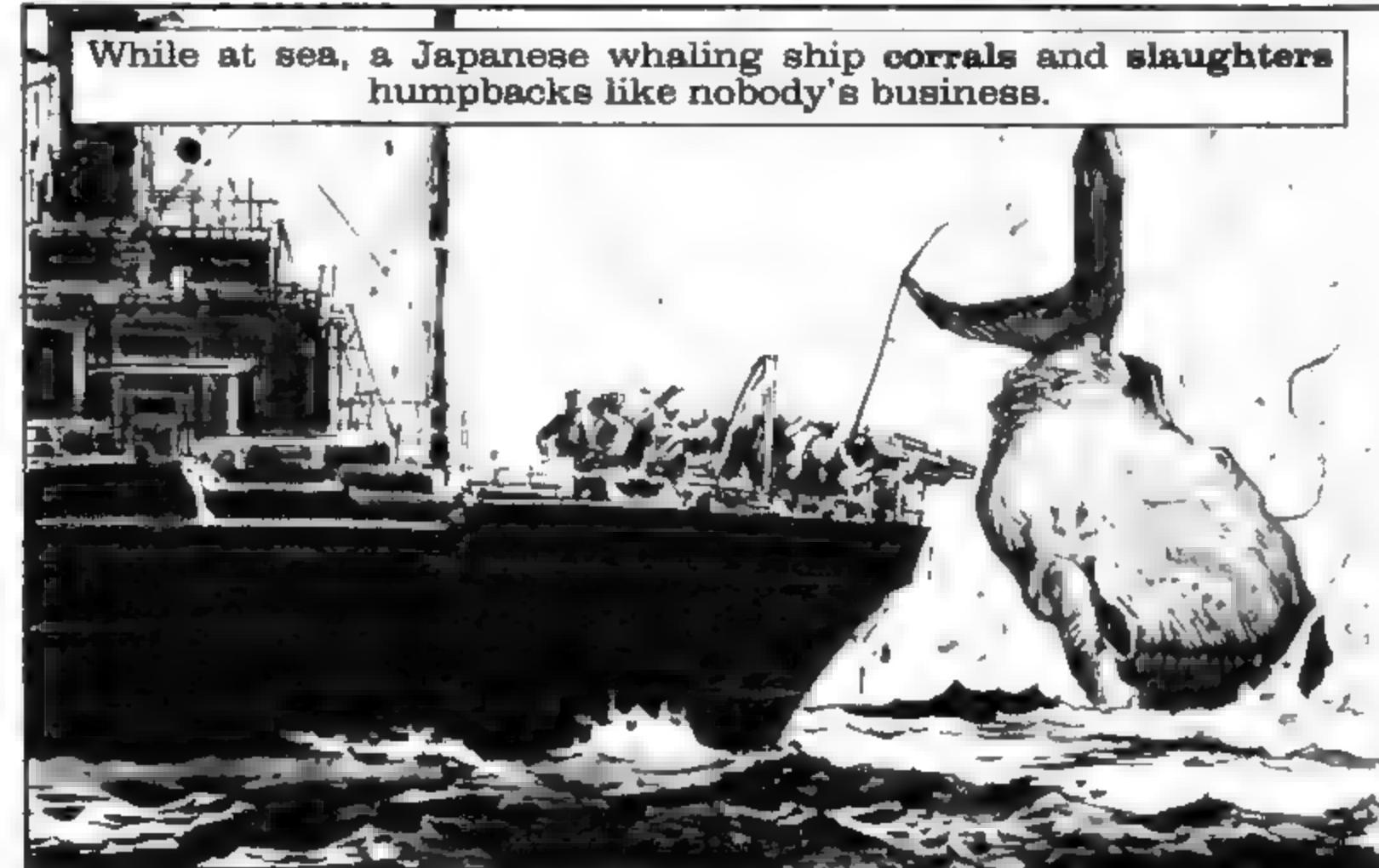
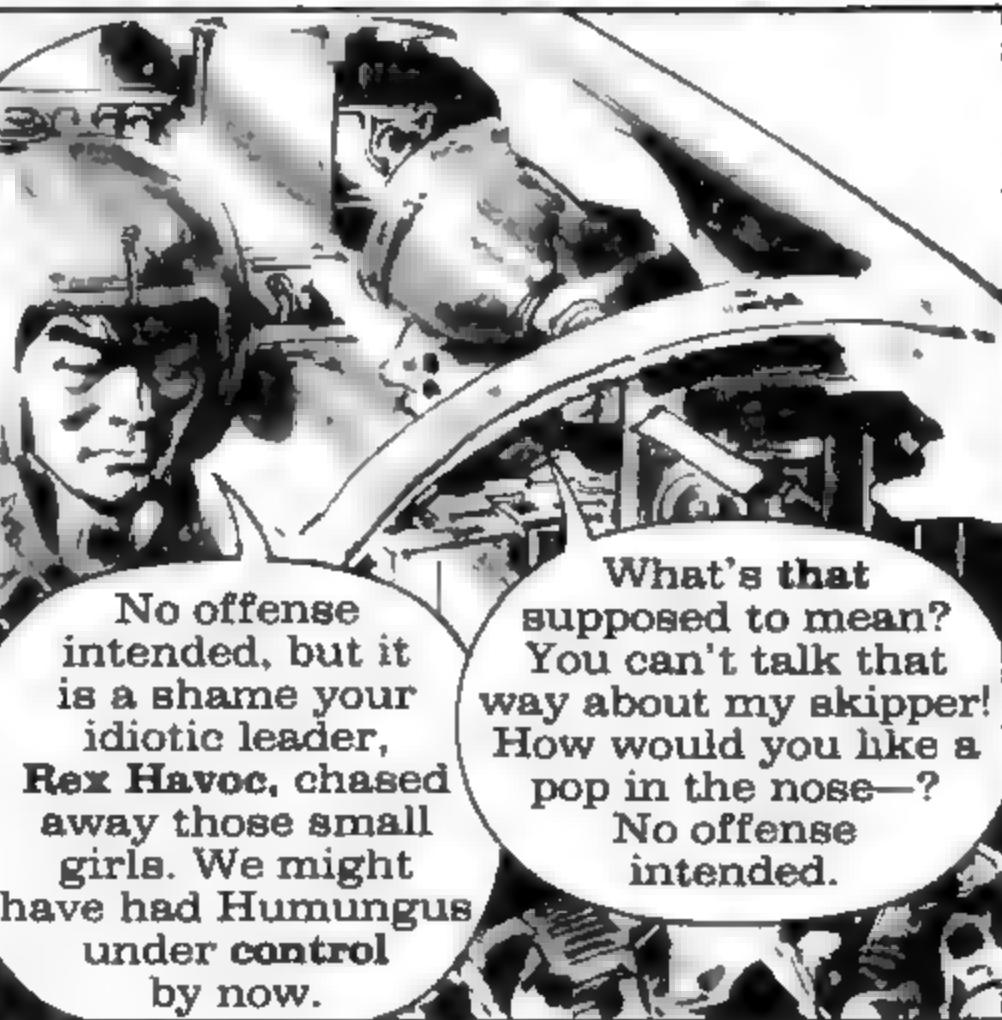


Back at
Humungus Crisis
Control . . . !

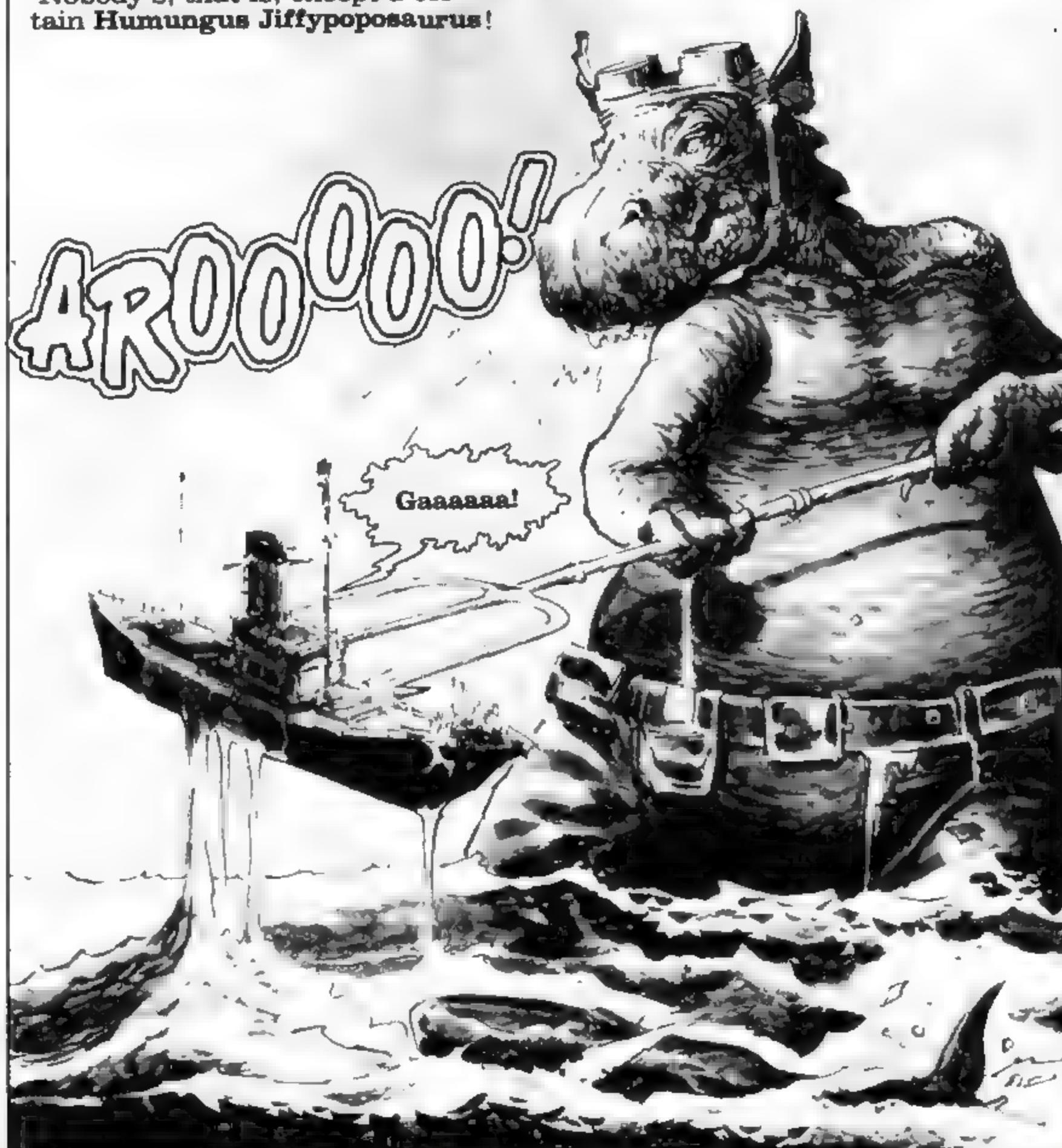
Major Fuwi,
I have a couple
prospective recruits
for you. I want you
to take them on a
recon flight of
Humungus.

You mean,
I'm not grounded
anymore, sir?

That's correct,
Major. Just remember
this is a reconnaissance
mission. I know you were
a kamikaze pilot who
never got to see any
action in the war, but
the war is over now.
You don't have to
prove anything to
anybody.



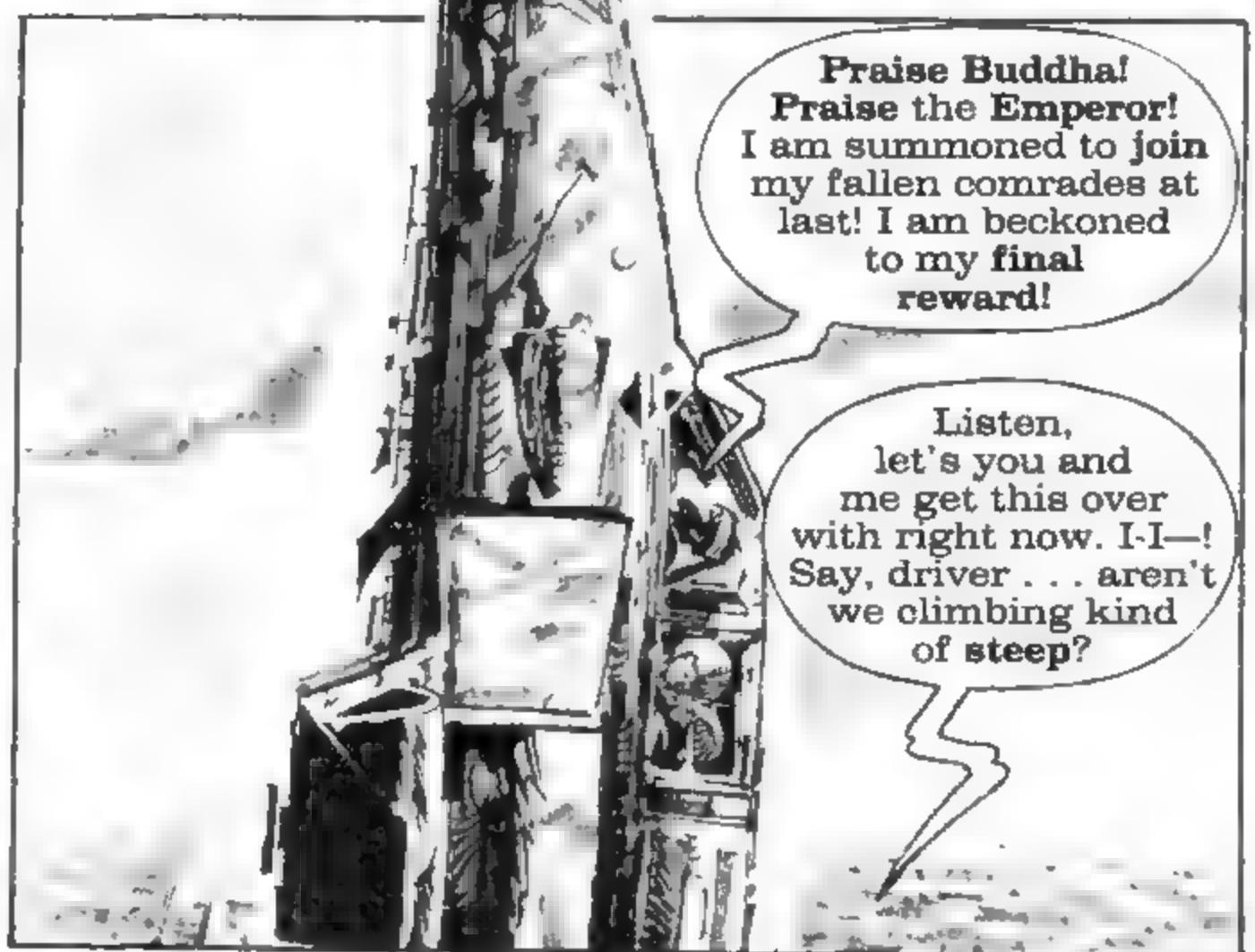
Nobody's, that is, except a certain Humungus Jiffypoposaurus!



And coming in, from above . . . !



The Japanese fighter-jet dives at the gargantuan reptile, its guns blazing with the flames of glory . . . !

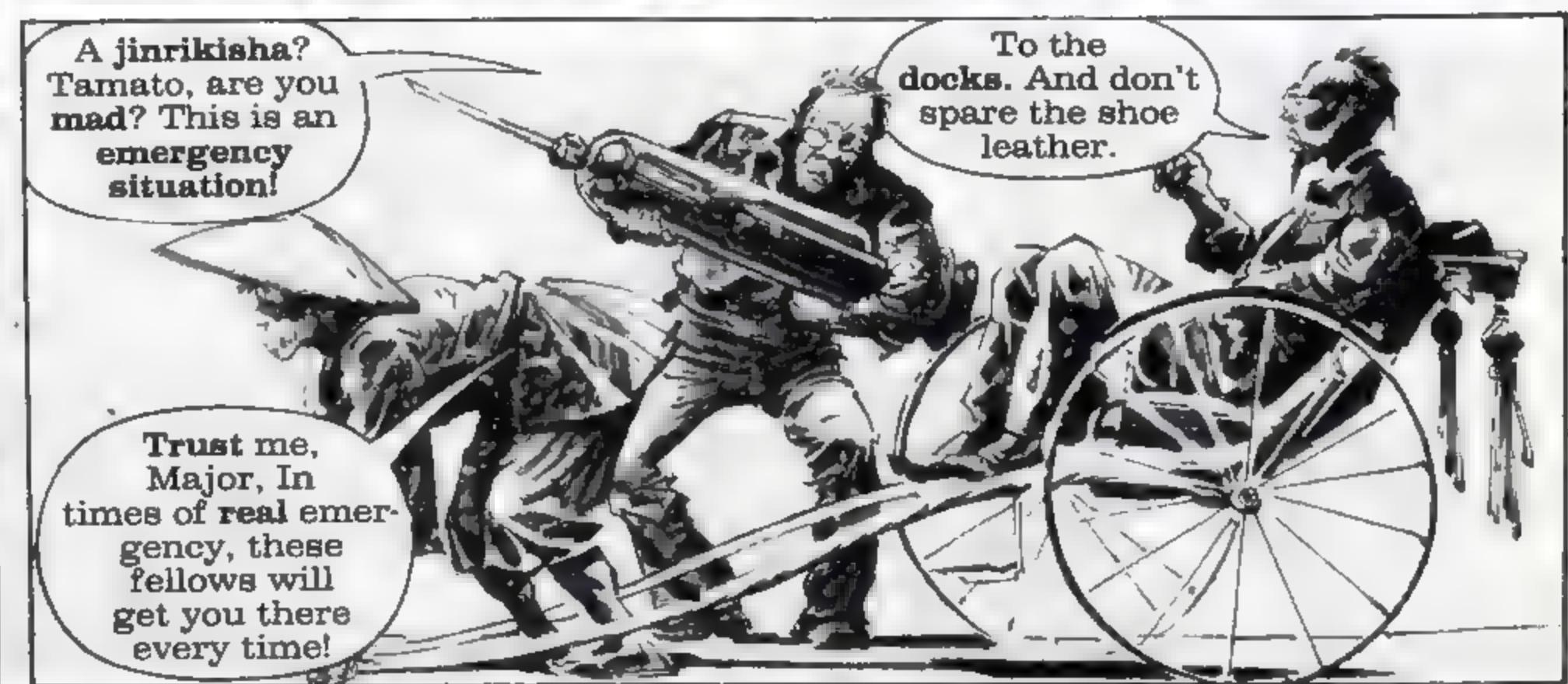
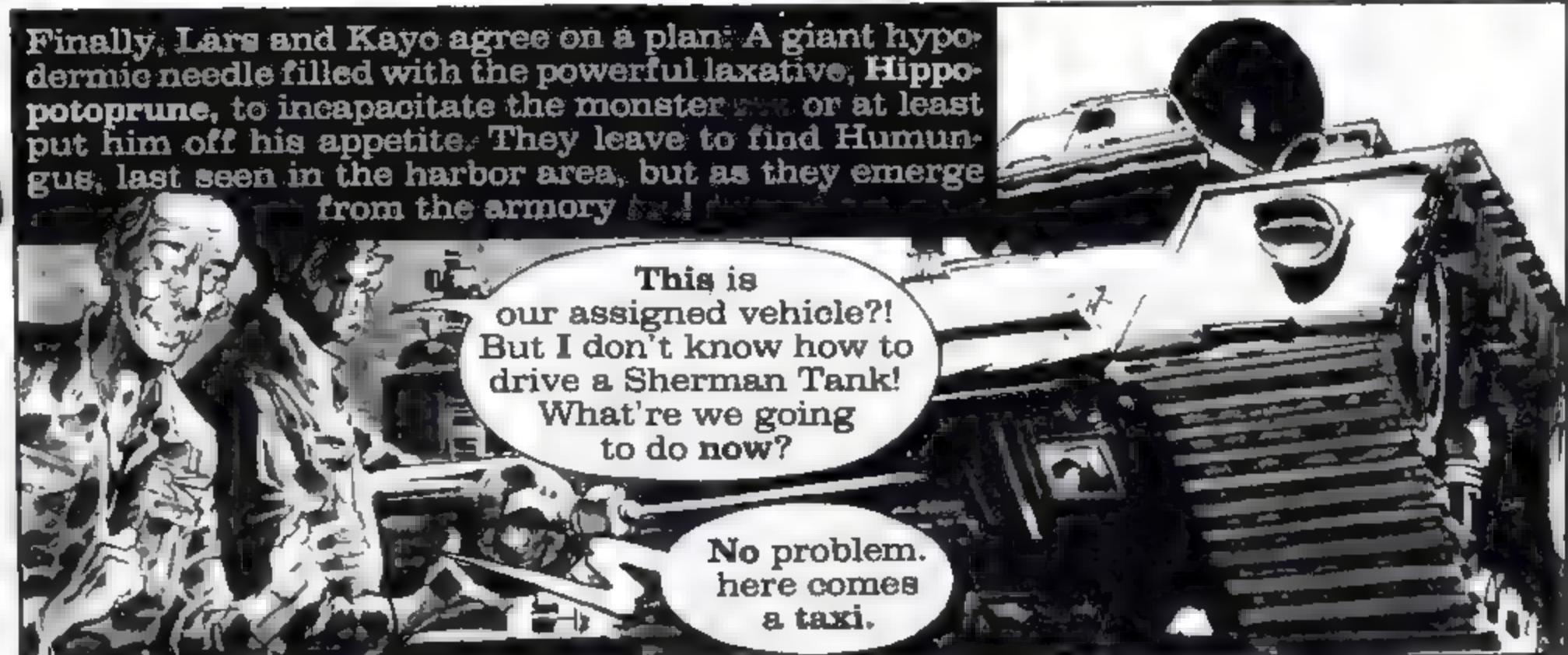
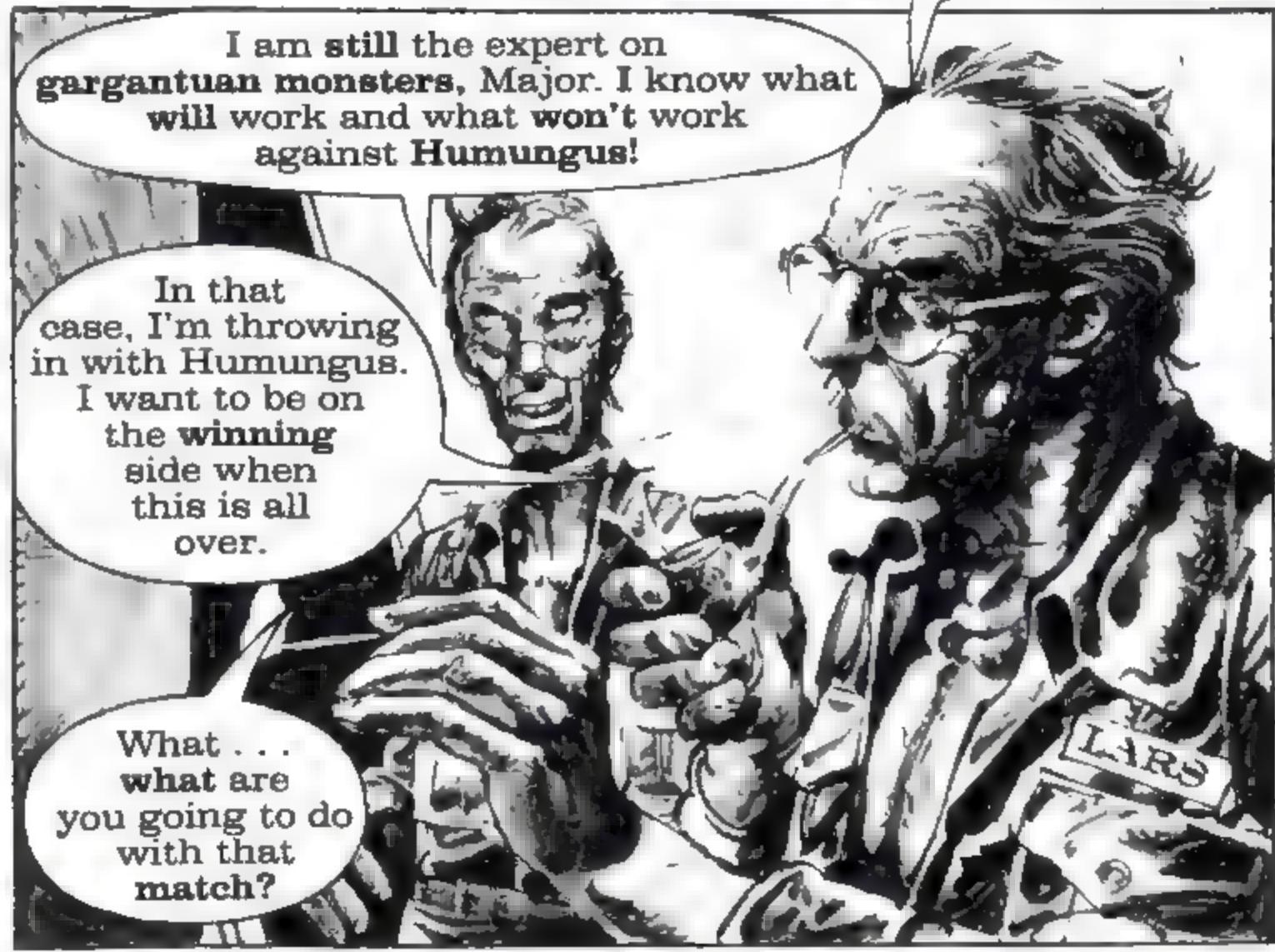
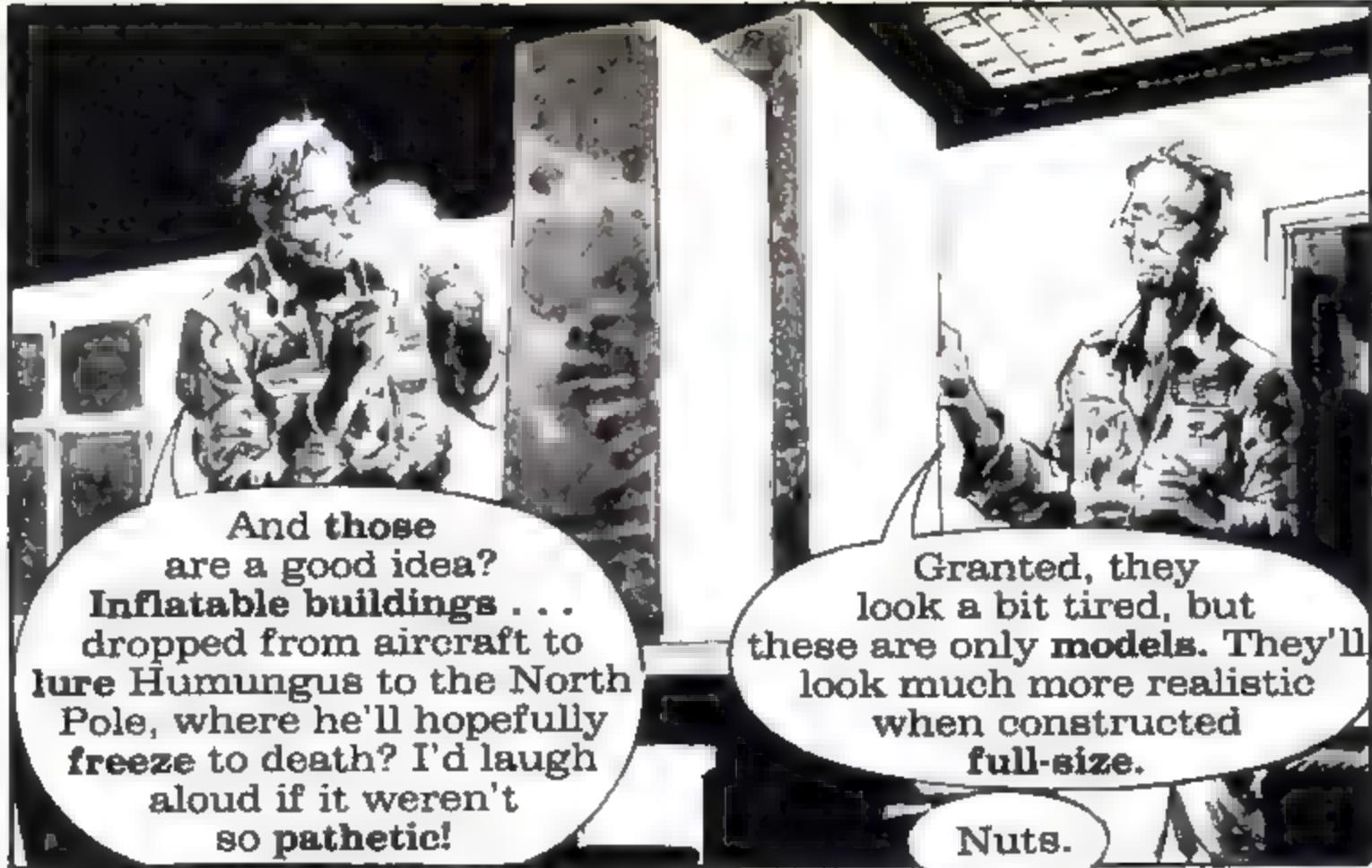


Meantime, at the armory, Lars and Tamato toil endlessly over their plans to stop Humungus... some of them bizarre, some of them really bizarre.

I see it this way, Doctor: We build this giant robot—a female Humungus—about four hundred feet high, slightly taller with high heels.

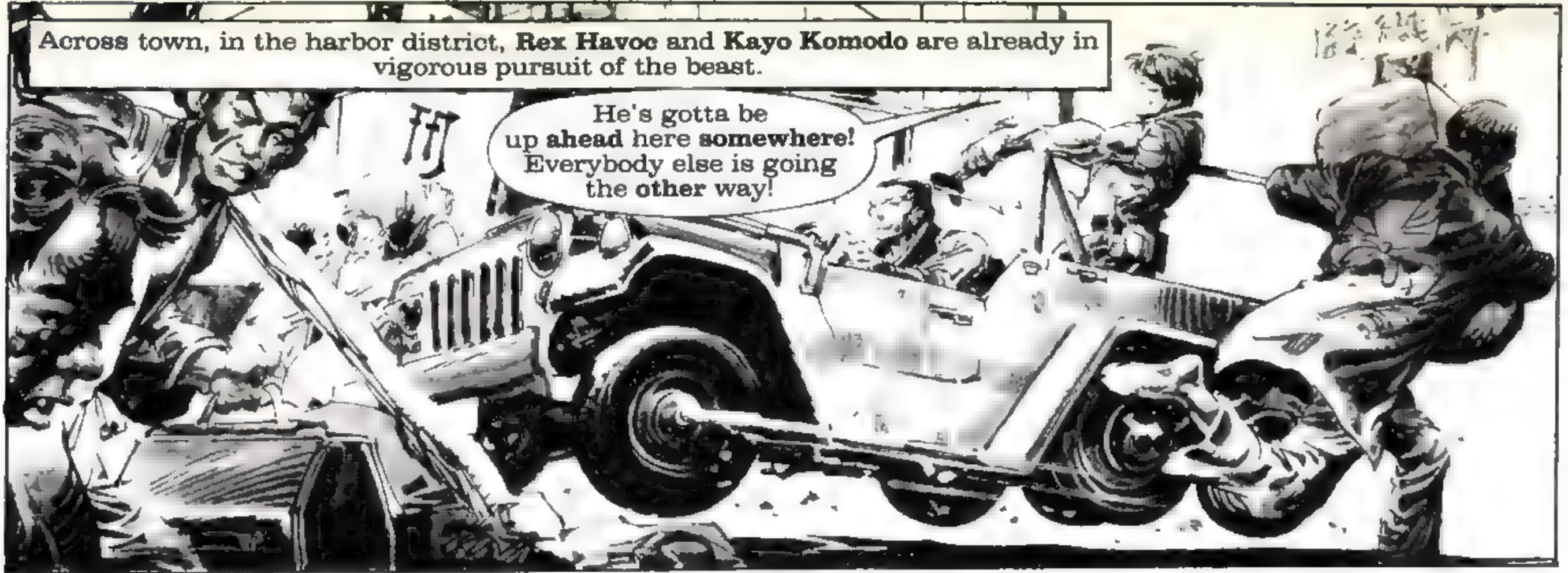


No, no, no! Prof. Rimbaldi has already shown that robots over forty feet high cannot work. The hydraulics leak, the whole thing just comes apart at the seams . . . !



Across town, in the harbor district, Rex Havoc and Kayo Komodo are already in vigorous pursuit of the beast.

He's gotta be up ahead here somewhere! Everybody else is going the other way!



When abruptly . . . !

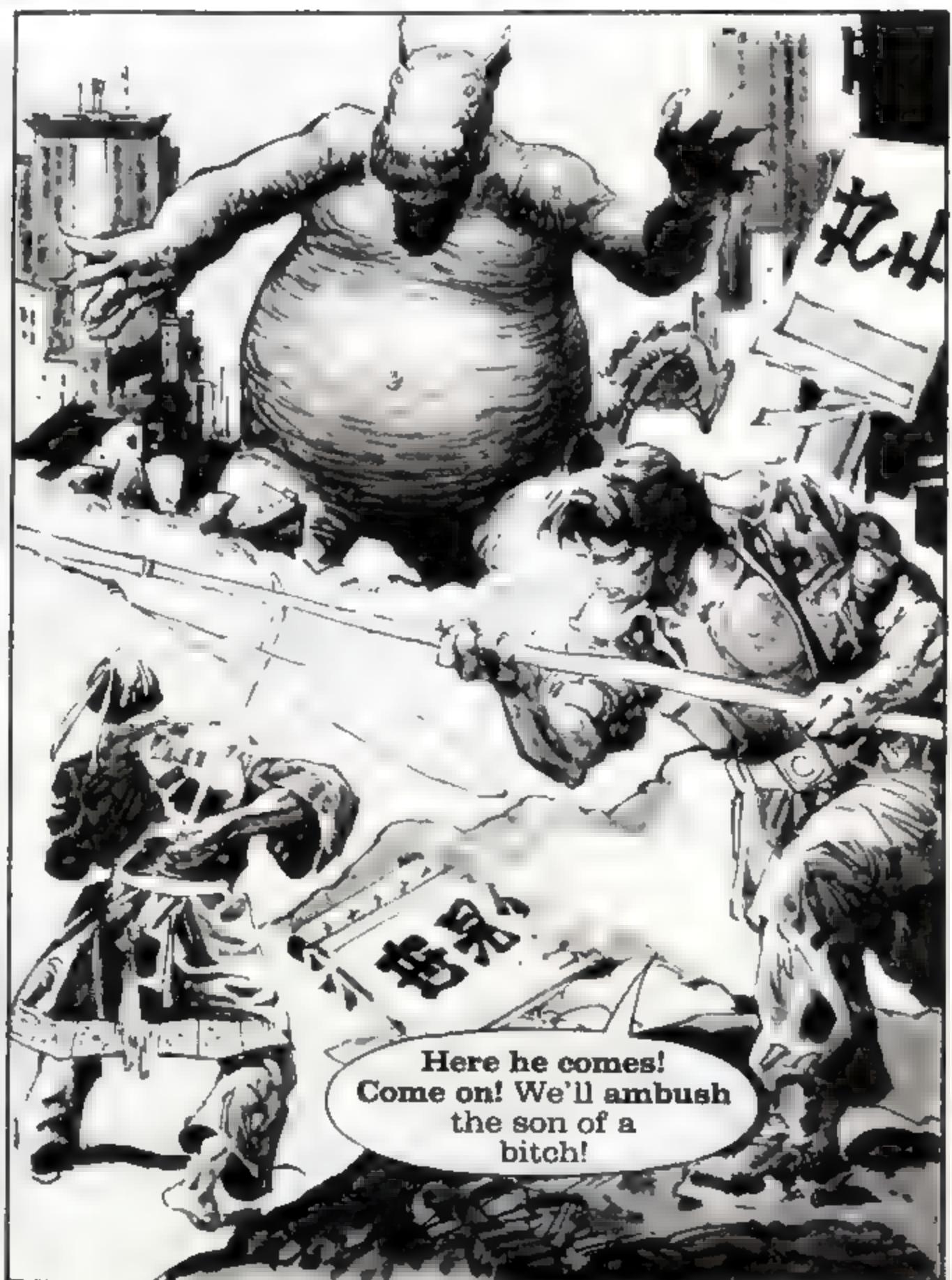
Gaaaaa!

SPEAMANNA!

Dinosaur flop.
No doubt about it. We're right on his tail.

Eh? You see something, Komodo?

暴力



But as Rex and Kayo run to a nearby building, Kayo stops Rex at the entrance, adamant that Rex comply with native custom.

老

蟲聽齊鳥

What? My boots? I gotta take them off before we go inside?

Okay, okay! What a country. No wonder you're always getting an ass-whipping from some big bozo.

On the roof . . .

Now hang onto me tight. 'Cause when I get this lasso on him he's going to give us one hell of a struggle!

Remember Pearl Harbor Whoop!

Halp! Halp!

鼻

Halp!
Kayo!
Save me!

HACK! SLICE!
CARVE!

SWIPE!

KRASH!

HELLLLEP!

Meanwhile, on
Toho Island . . . !

C'mon, Goddammo.
She didn't mean it
about Kong whipping
you. Please help
us.

Just get
outta here,
willya? Beat it!
You got me into
enough trouble.

Sure I meant
it. Sissy pants
Goddammo,
sissy pants
Goddammo . . . !

Tell him
you didn't mean
it, Bruno.

Meanwhile, in
Tokyo Bay . . . !

You guys
sure knew enough
English before it
came to work.

Paddle . . .
row . . . like this
. . . we have to row
if we're going to
get back to land.
Understand?

Meanwhile, in
Downtown Tokyo

Jinriksha, hmmm?
Trust you, hmmm? Well,
so much for that. This
hippopotoprune has
lost its potency.

Now, if
you'd only listened
to me . . . !

If I'd
listened to you,
we'd still be building
that four hundred foot
robotess! There's
nothing to do now
but return to the
armory.

Meanwhile, in a
back alley in the
harbor district . . . !

A fat lot of
help you were. Soon as
we got out of sight, Humungus
was all over me like a
cheap suit.

Oh
goddammit!
The son of a
bitch stole
my wallet,
too!

By nightfall,
beaten, ragged,
exhausted, all
the members of
both teams
come together
again at the ar-
mory. As they
look around at
each other, it is
painfully obvi-
ous that none
of them have
made any head-
way against
Humungus.

Nothing cheery to report,
I see. Looks like we're right back where
we started from.

Rex, what
happened to your
boots?

Oh, I'm
too pissed off
to even talk
about it.

"In the spirit of international cooperation and friendship," my ass. This woman did everything in her power to undermine my attempts to get Goddammo for us.



And Yam wouldn't help row the raft when our plane crashed. I had to row clear across Tokyo Bay all by myself.



He said Kayo had the mind of a dazed periwinkle.

Nothing a frontal lobotomy couldn't fix, you understand.

Son, that's rude and uncalled for. Name-calling is not going to get us anywhere.

Although, if it must be known, I'm not yet convinced your Mr. Havoc has been completely housebroken.

Just like everything produced in Japan, you're cheap imitations! And believe me, when this is over, we're all going to have ourselves one big jolly lawsuit.

You're awfully goddamn high and mighty for somebody who's stolen our trademark, copied our uniforms, and damn near taken our company name, too.

Are you threatening us with threats? Because if you are, let me warn you—!

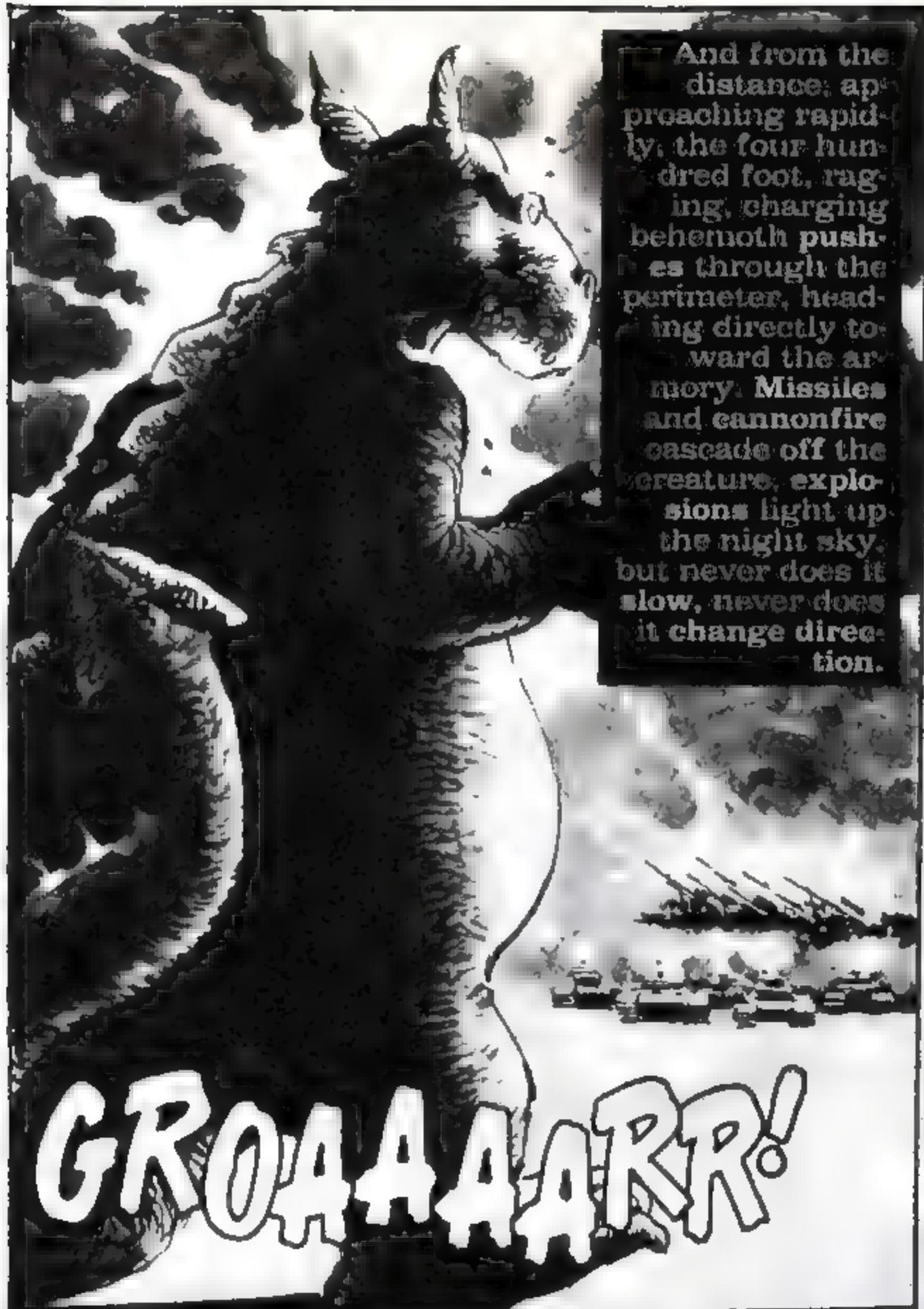


Electricity sparks the air. The two camps stand apart, ready to clash at the twitch of a muscle.



Tension is at the highest critical point, ready to explode. But . . . !



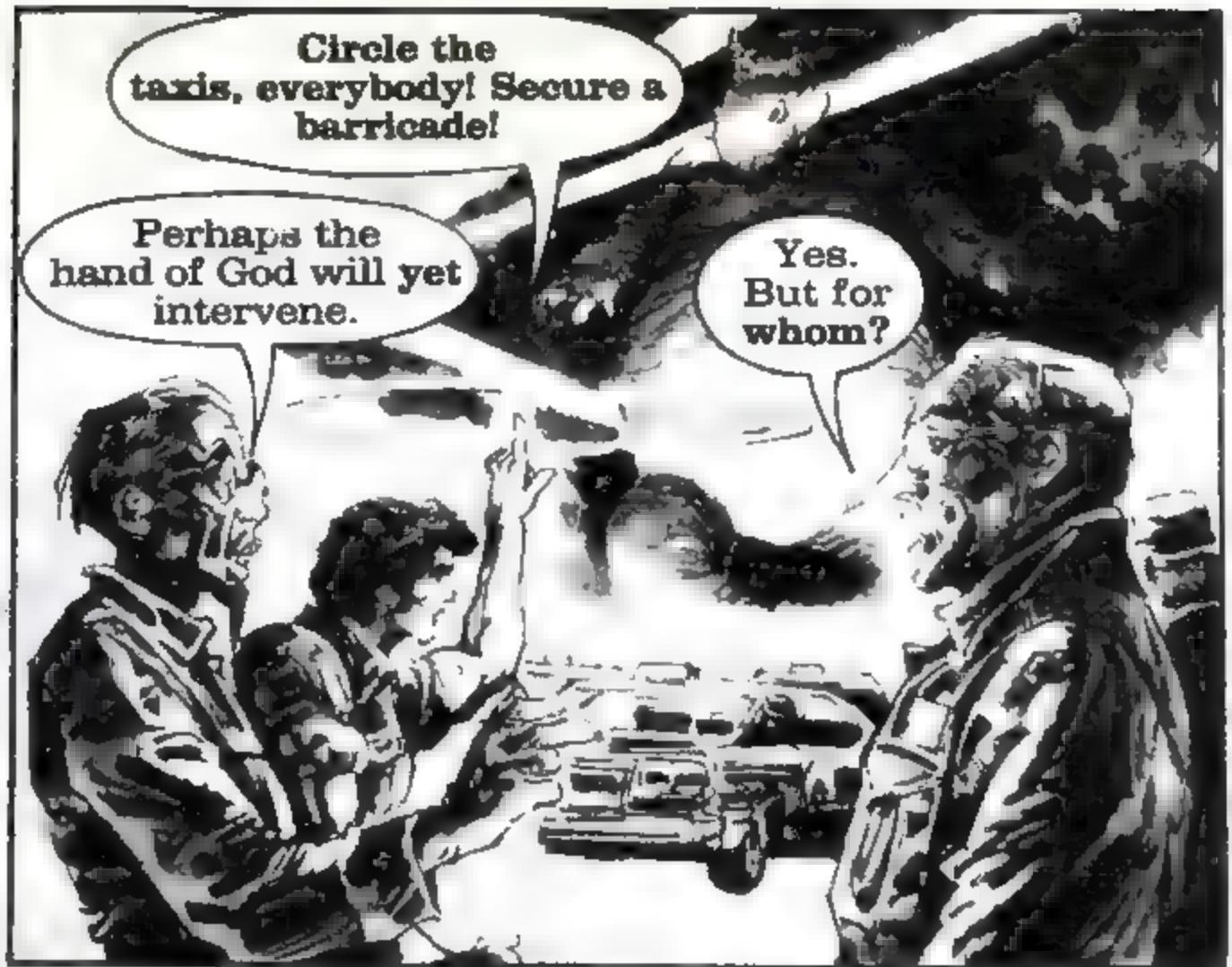


And from the distance; approaching rapidly, the four hundred foot, rag-ing, charging behemoth pushes through the perimeter, heading directly toward the armory. Missiles and cannonfire cascade off the creature, explo-sions light up the night sky, but never does it slow, never does it change direc-tion.

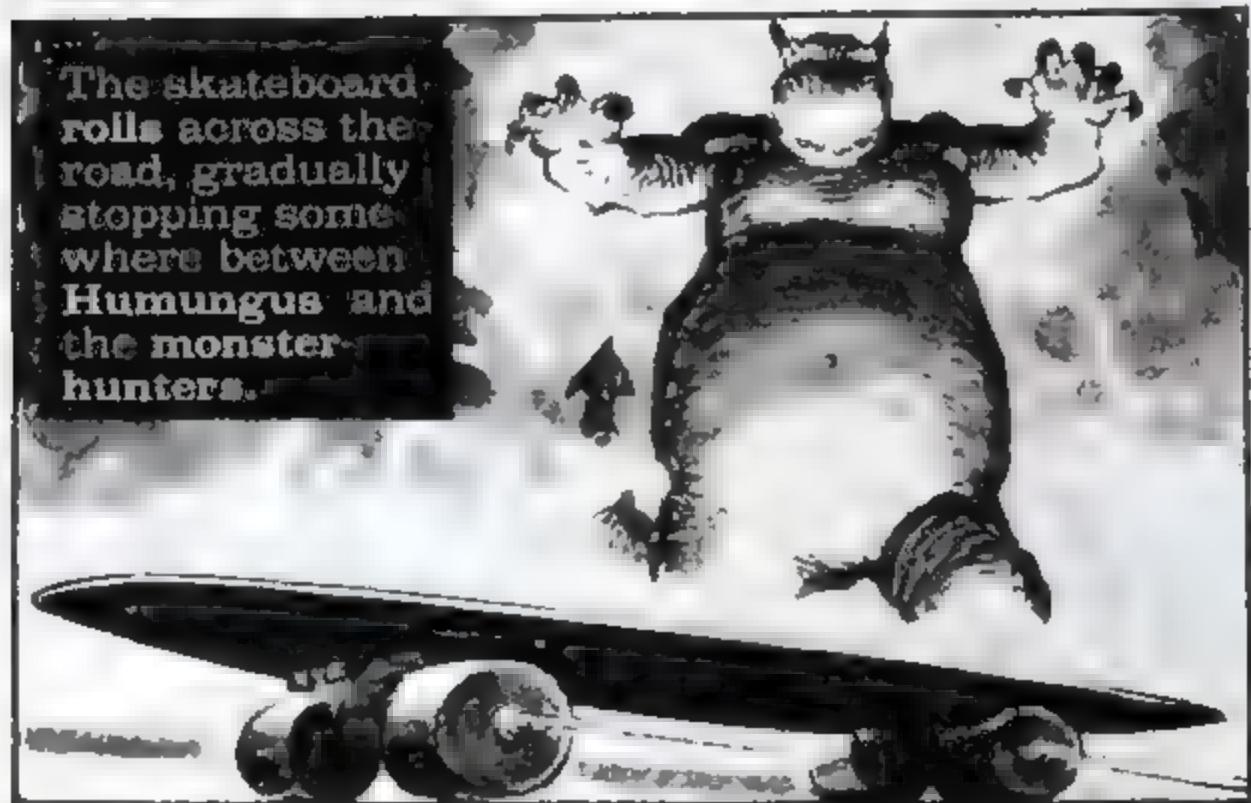
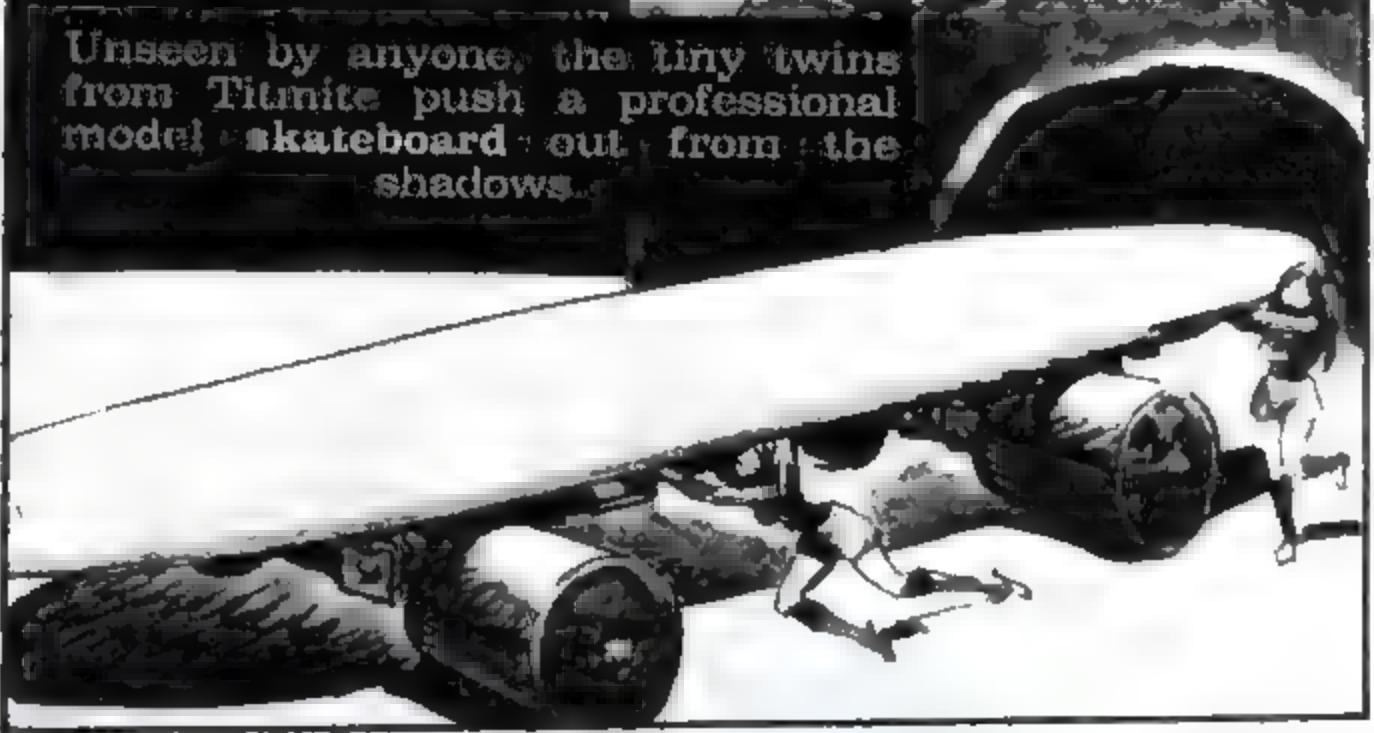
**Circle the
taxis, everybody! Secure a
barricade!**

Perhaps the hand of God will yet intervene.

Yes.
But for
whom?



Unseen by anyone, the tiny twins from Titonite push a professional model skateboard out from the shadows.



The skateboard rolls across the road, gradually stopping somewhere between Humungus and the monster-hunters.

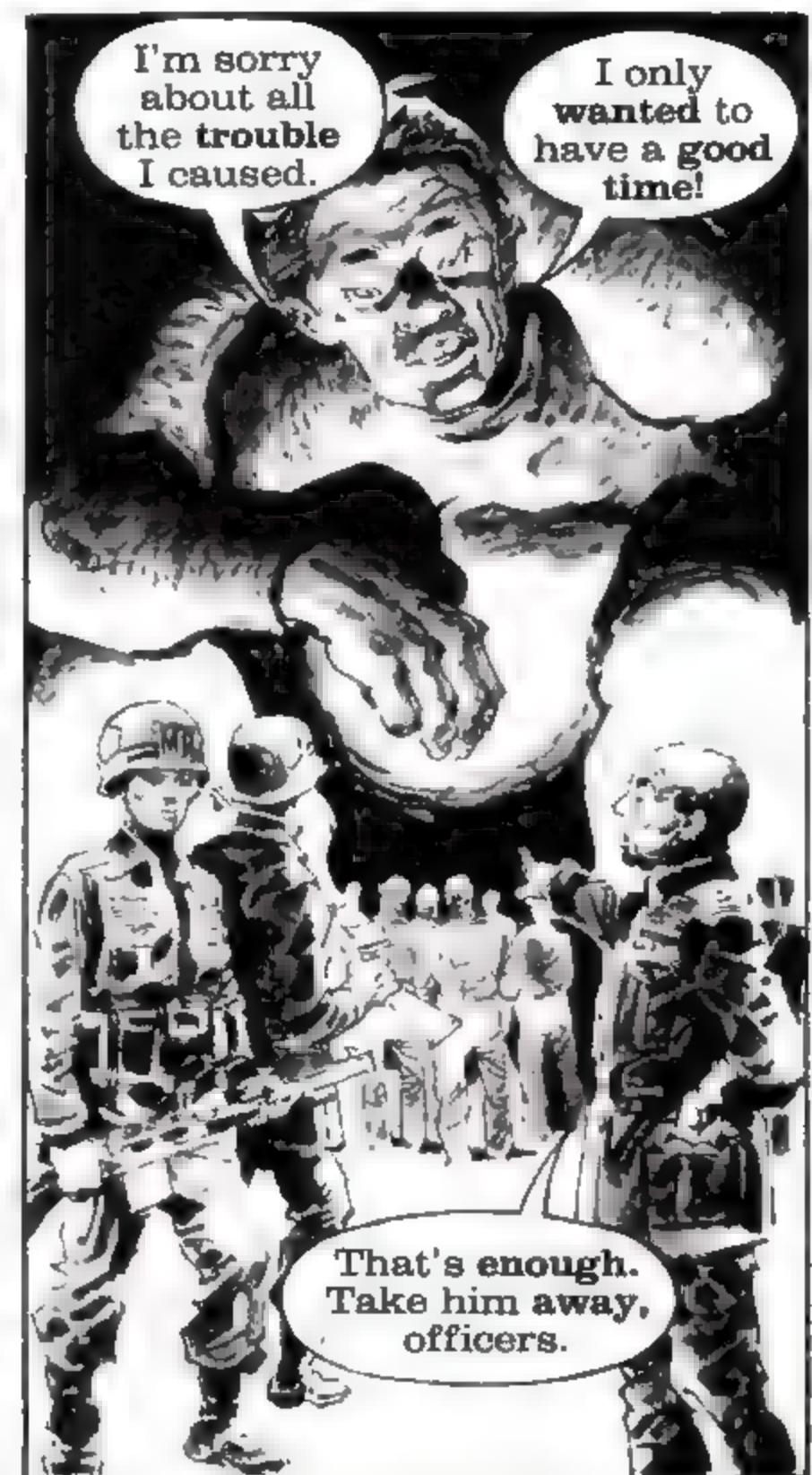
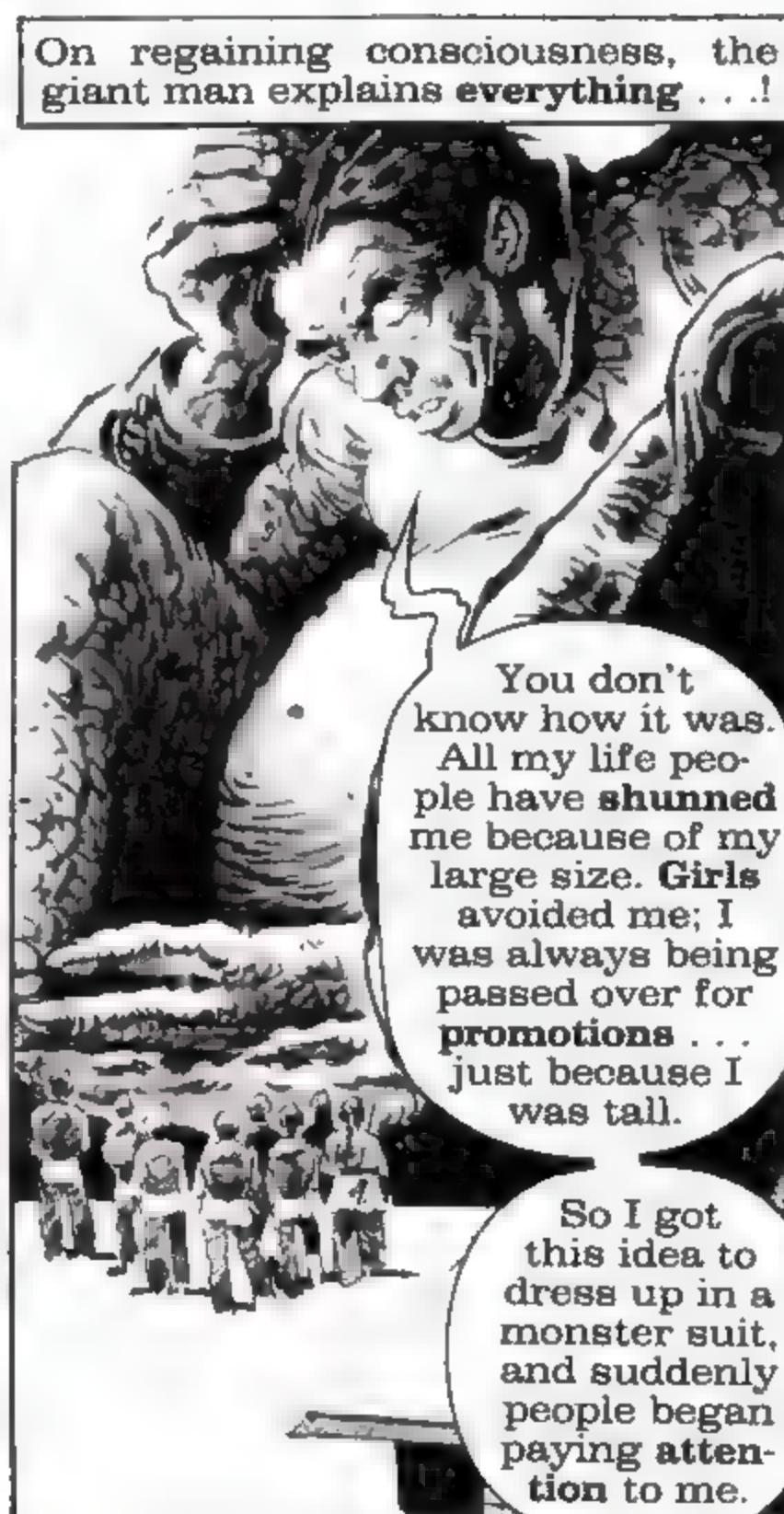


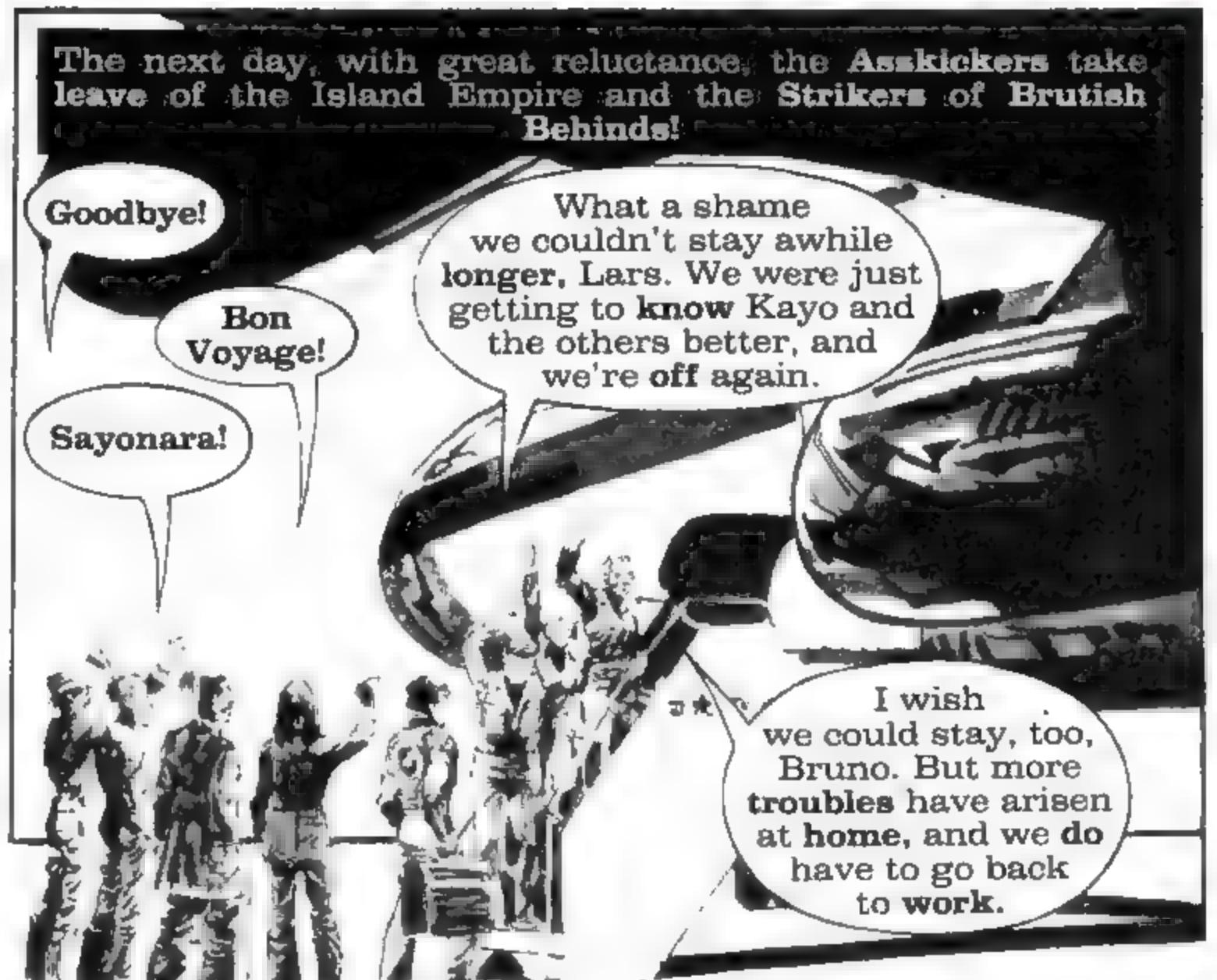
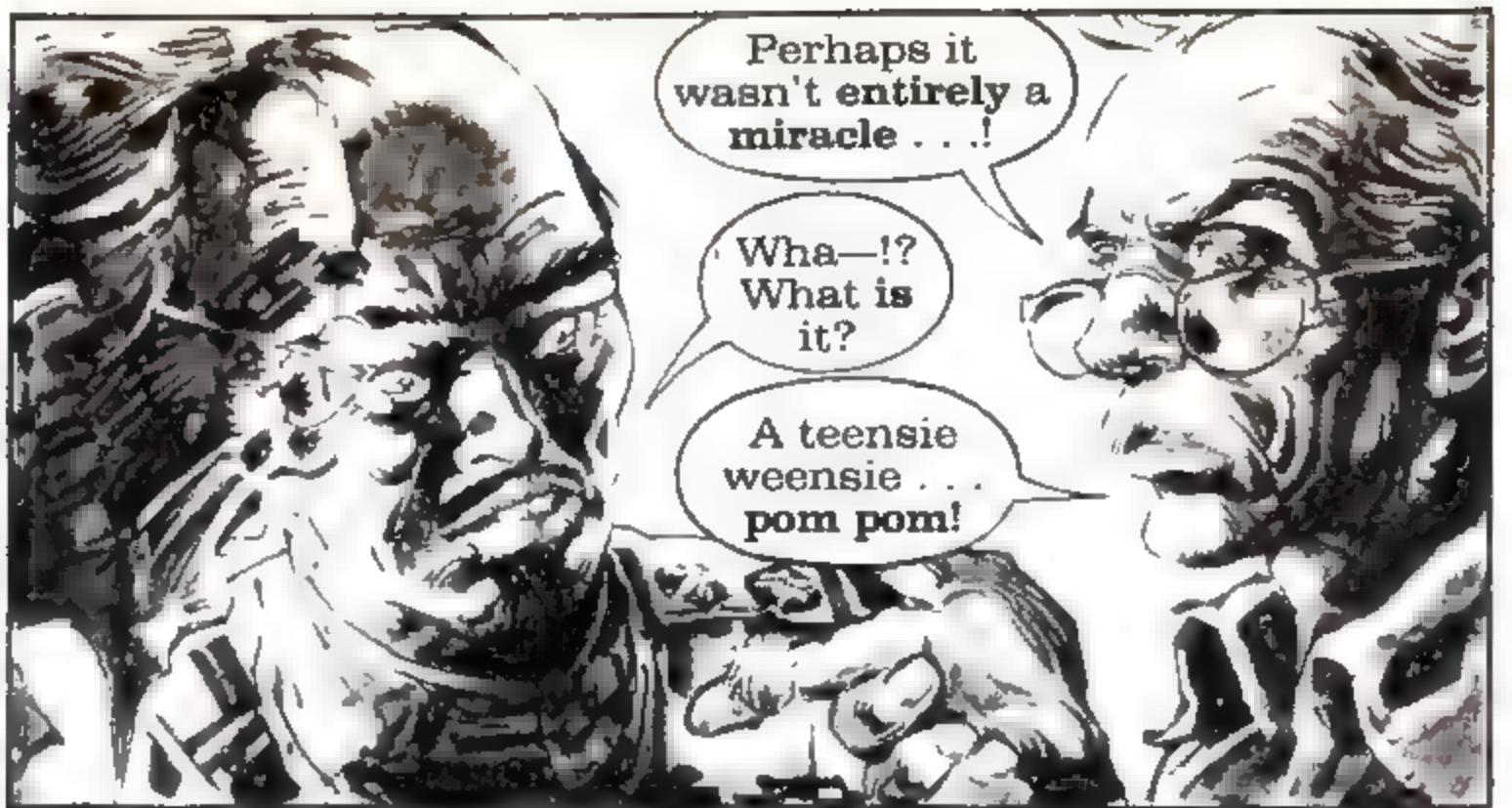
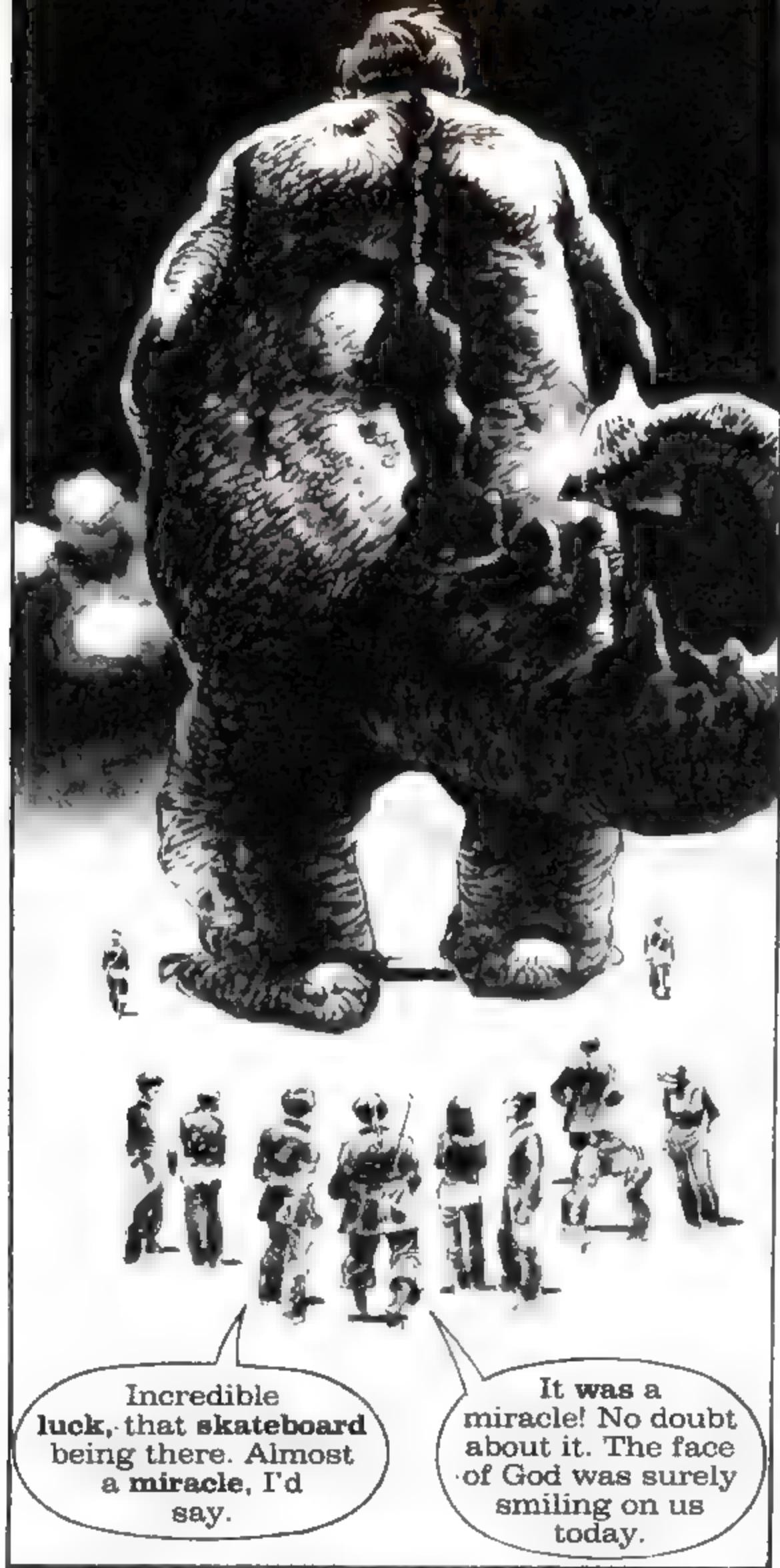
Almost upon them, hardly a hundred yards off, Humungus bears steadily toward the group. In another moment, it will be all over.



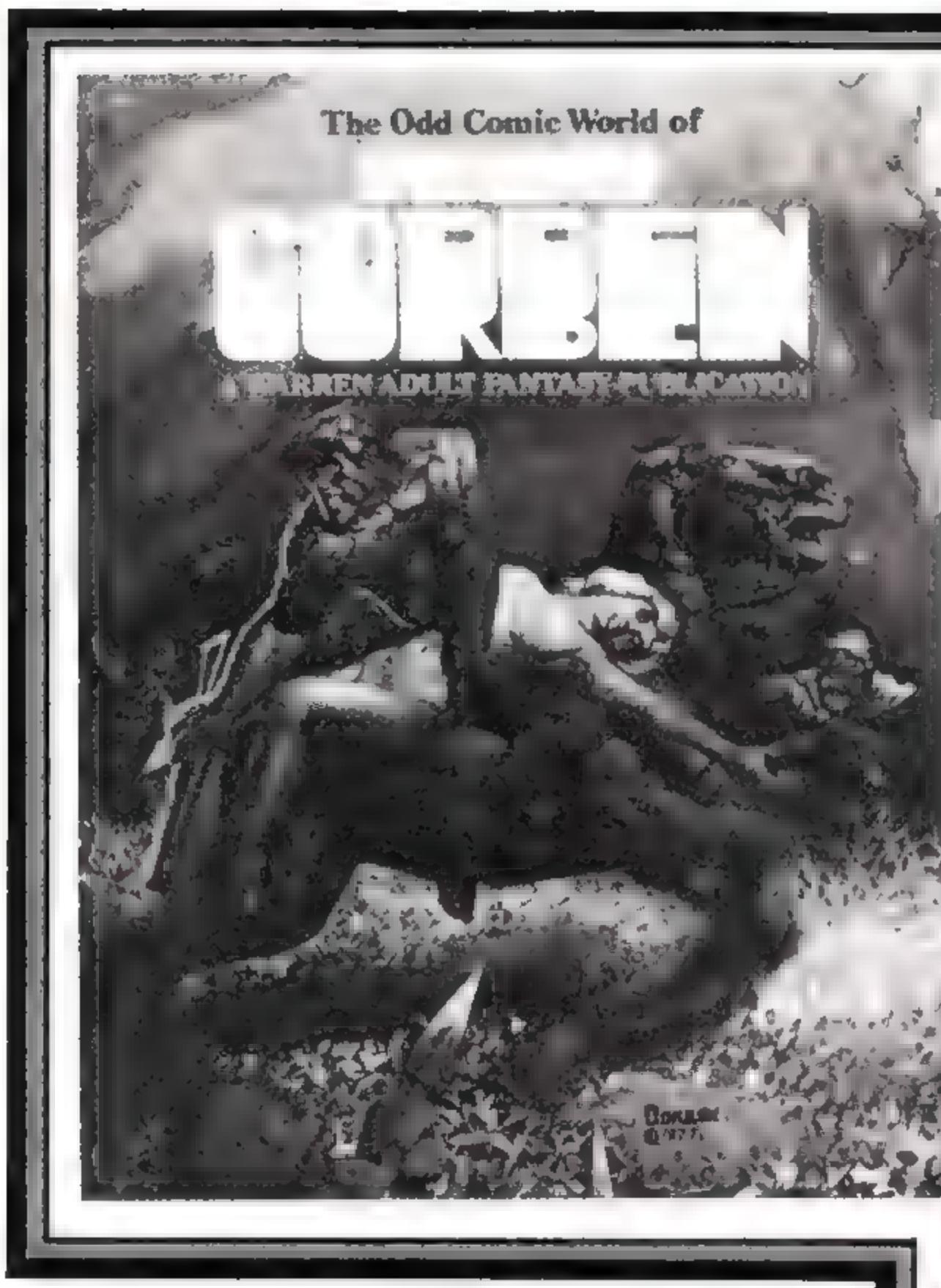
KRASHH!

AROOOGAH!





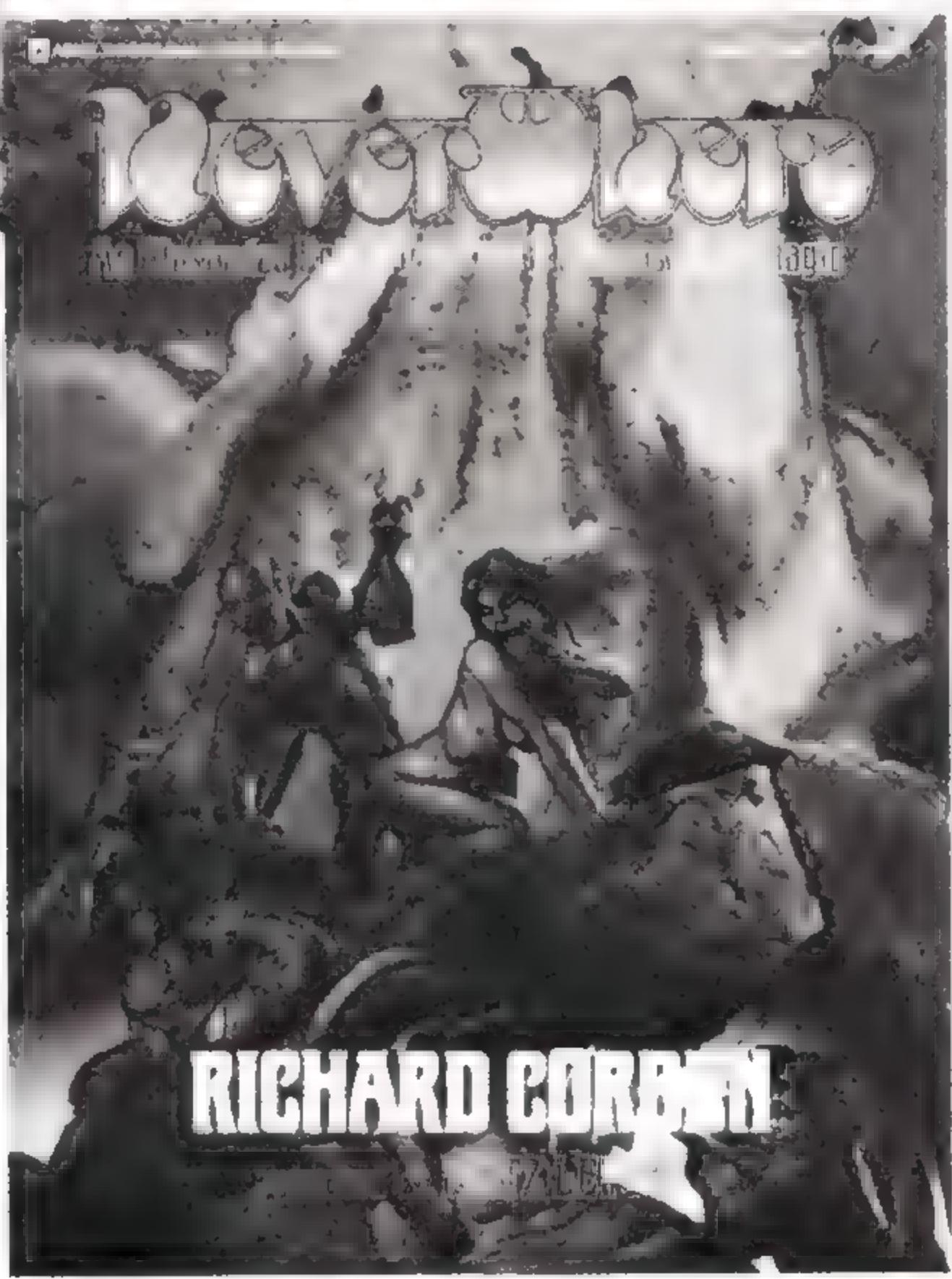
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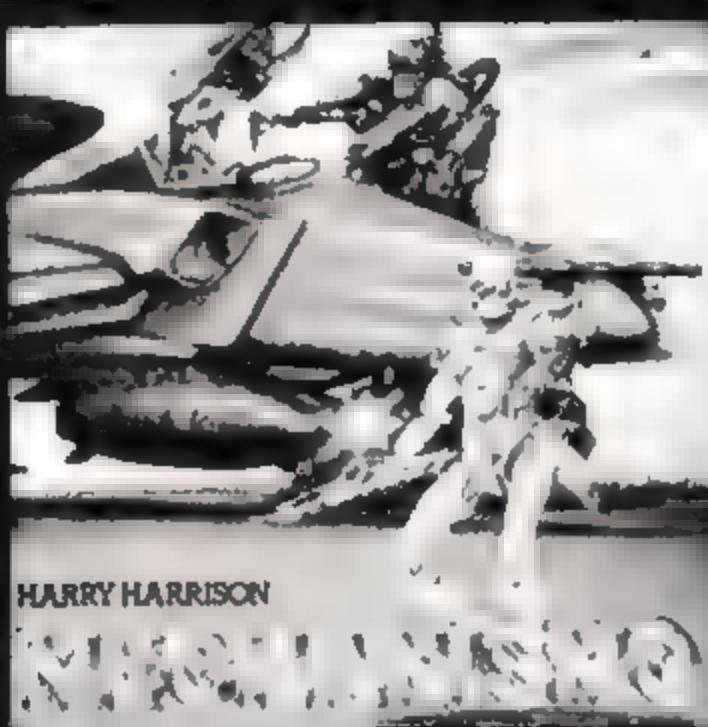


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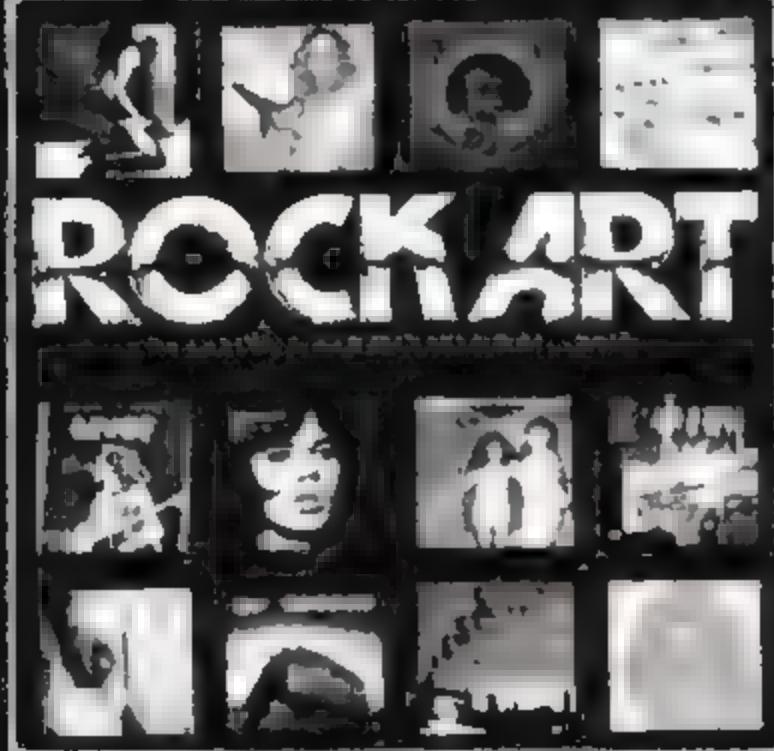
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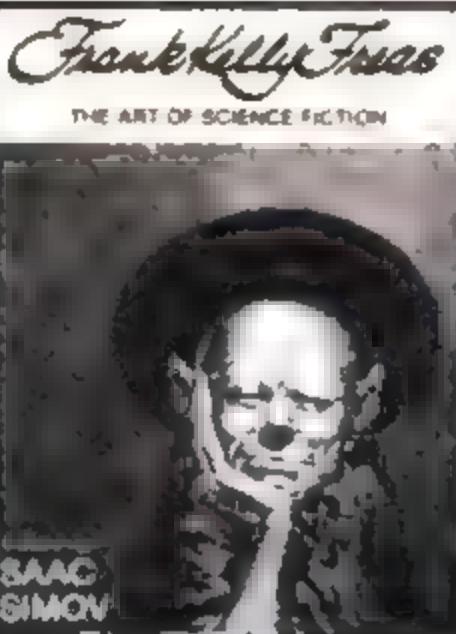
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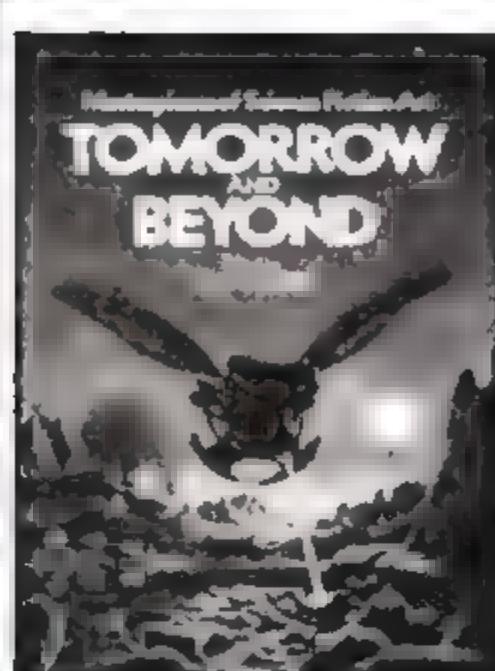
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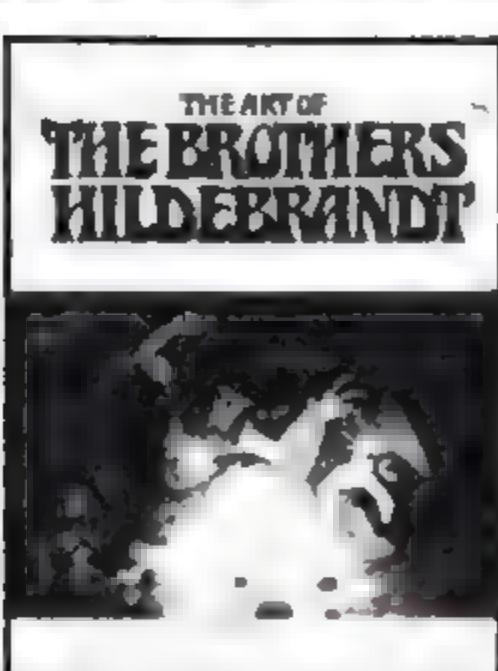
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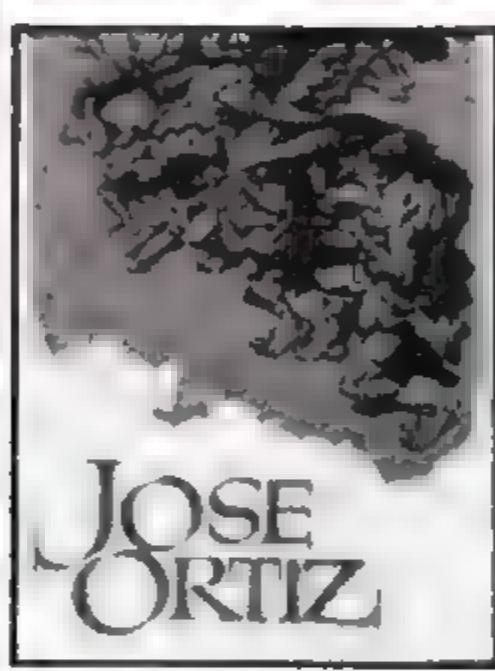
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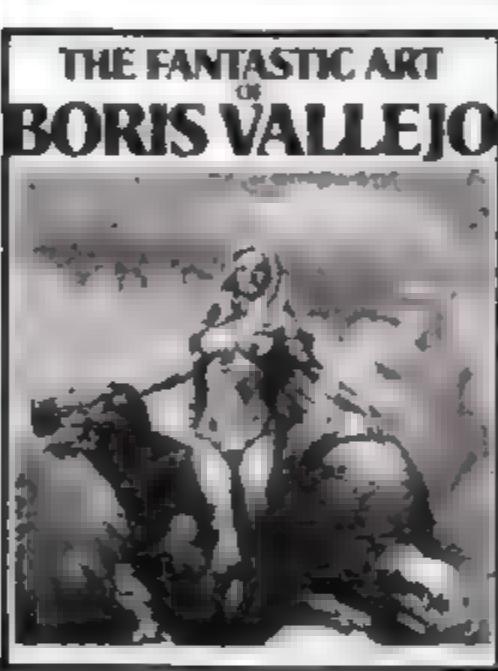


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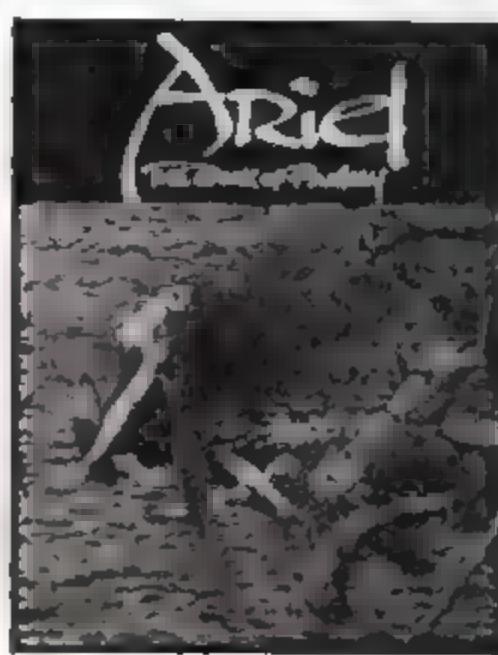
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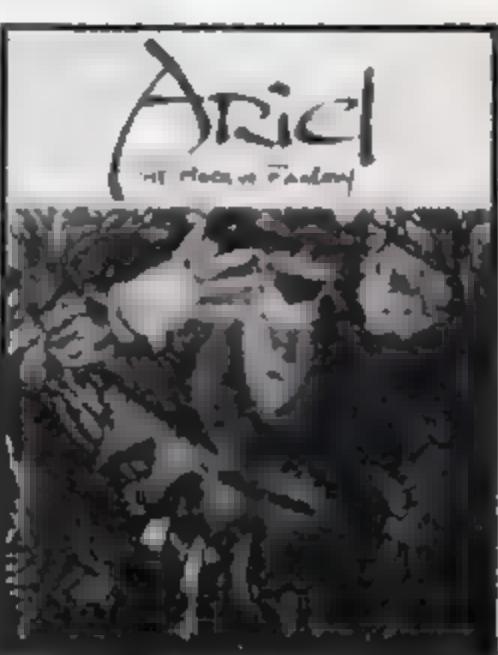
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Omigod! He jumped! That futz-brained fool actually jumped!

Not be concerned, Mrs. Diamondhart! Noble wife has no reason to be distraught!

Y-You know my name! But how?!

Allow me introduce this rowdy cur. Am Hemrock Moto, certified public detective! I believe noble husband not dead! Can offer illefutable proof when tumbring body finarry hits bottom... thlee minutes fom now!

An incredulous throng of humans and wildcat striking robots strains closer to hear the incredible Mr. Moto's strange pronouncement! Is this the grim jest of a hebephrenic schitzo-paranoid? A clever ruse of that top-rated three-dee teevee show "Candid Hologram?" Or is it something far more sinister. Match wits with the emotionless Mr. Moto as he unravels the tangled clues of...

The SCHMOO CONNECTION

But first, madame, need know when your husband started acting... strange.

Here's your soylent sausage, hon!

Thanks, sugarnums! Hmm... interesting articles in this morning's rap-sheet.

Plas-blob from Uranus, eh!? Heh! Heh! That is interesting news!

"Cranfranz was scanning the morning data sheet when he grunted something about Plas-blobs from another world. Suddenly, he jumped up from the breakfast table, and rushed off without hardly touching his food...!"

"He returned shortly before lunch wearing his Sunday best! He... he never said a word. He just winked at me once, flashed a disgusting shit-eating grin... then stepped off the hiwalk into thin air!"

Thoughtfully, the slanty-eyed sleuth slowly nods and mutters: "Ah so, just as I thought!" And the milling crowd of picketing workbots and humans alike gasp at Mr. Moto's brilliant deductive reasoning!

The curious crowd of man and machine follows the indomitable detective to the nearest drop descent tube . . . !

Ret's take dlower . . . see Miister Dliamondhart's sowcarred lemain! By way . . . not suppose noble husband fought in Gheat Ulanian Wlars?

Gasp! He . . . He did . . . ! But that was over twenty years ago! How could you have known?

Erementary, my good worman!

Jesus fucking Christ! What a scumminy shit-fucking mess . . . !

Choke!

Akkkk!

Gaggg!

Plesume glops of pus-colored goo not possibry come flom noble husband . . . !

Please note greenish hue of defunct form's scattered anatomy!

Th-That's . . . Barf! Heave! . . . r-right!

. . . Which concurusivery ploves ancient Oriental theoly that dead thling slomeone or somethong erse!

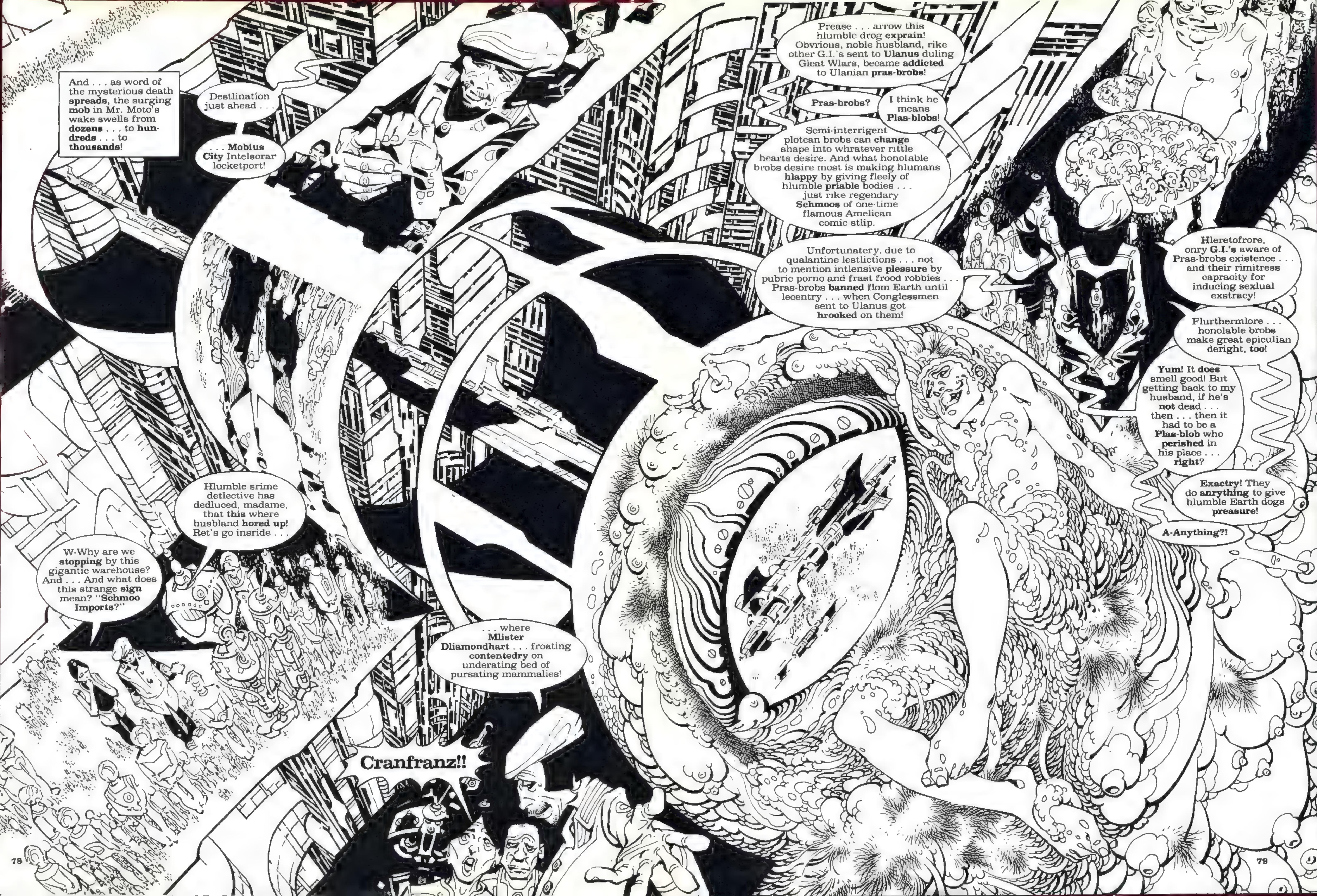
Gaaaaakk!

When done retching, noble wife may kindry forrow this meager worm.

Flind noble husband slafe and slound!

Knowing old sordiers' ratent phirandeling reacity, this rowry cesspool wlorm is certain Miister Dliamondhart enjoying serf immeasulabry.

The rapidly swelling crowd monopolizes the upper and downer tubes before finally taking a null-grav moving belt parkway . . . to only Mr. Moto knows where!



If these Schmoos do all the things you claim . . . I can understand why Cranfranz went to such extremes to sneak off! Plas-blobs can satisfy his needs much better than I ever could!

You've put my mind at ease, Mr. Moto! How can I ever repay you?

This rowry exlement happy to be of selvice.

Not onry is this humble capitairist dog plartime pubric detective . . .

. . . but this rowry cur also dury-licensed full-time schmoo imploter! Flee publicity of honolable husband's escapades payment enough.

Hey, mister, y'said them critters can take on any shape! How about a 38-26-36?

Yes . . . and . . . any . . . length . . . as well?

Collect!

Hot diggity! wrap me up a dozen!

Yeehaaa!
I want one, too!

Mine!
Mine!

Gimme a fat one
with jalamas like
basketballs!

Save one
for me!

Gangway!

Whoopee!

I want
mine hung
like a
sausage.

I want
mine hung
like two
sausages!

Ahem!
Care to split a Schmoo with me, my dear?

Tee Hee!
We don't even know
each other! But . . .
giggle . . . why
not?

Bletter fly up
another batch, Kato!
Honorable tleeming murtitudes
working up one herr of an
appetite!

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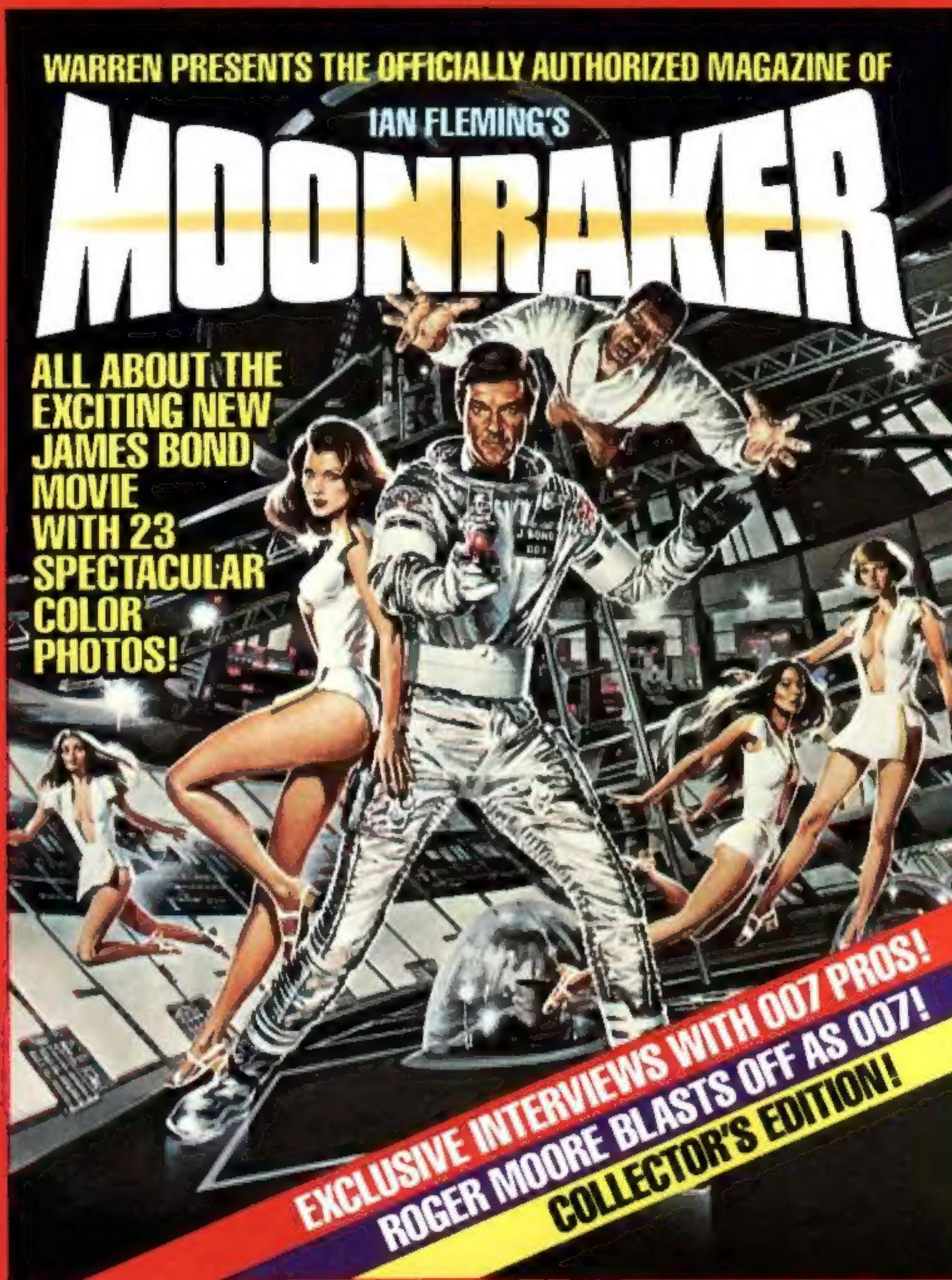


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